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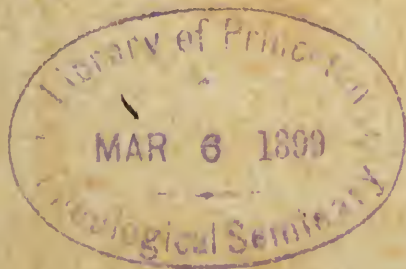
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For 49 Years the Pastor of this Church.

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MEDITATIONS.



MEDITATIONS
ON THE
LAST DAYS OF CHRIST,
CONSISTING OF
TEN SERMONS,
PREACHED AT
CONSTANTINOPLE AND ODESSA.

BY
WILLIAM G. SCHAUFFLER,
Missionary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

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P R E F A C E .

THE present series of Meditations is presented to the Christian reader with unfeigned diffidence; and the rather so because the specific circumstance which led to its publication is not of a nature to meet the public eye. That these unassuming endeavors share, in a more than common degree, the imperfection of all human efforts, I feel deeply, and confess freely; but I hope that the profitableness and importance of the subject, and the comparative scarcity of sermons upon the historical parts of the Sacred Scriptures will induce some to peruse these pages. If any of the readers should find but half the spiritual profit in their perusal which I was permitted to reap from their composition, they will bless the Lord with me for the precious portions of holy writ which form their basis. That the general subject of these Meditations would bear to be enlarged upon with growing profit and delight to an indefinite extent, all will readily agree; but I durst not tax the reader's indulgence more than I have done. In heaven we shall dwell upon it forever.

But one may ask how I was led to the composition of discourses of this kind. Partly, I was weary of preaching upon abstract subjects; and partly, Krummacher's Elias, a series of sermons upon the history of Elijah, had awakened in me a new relish for the history of the Bible. To select this most difficult portion of Scripture history

I was led by a beautiful ancient German hymn upon the burial of Christ, by the pious Paul Gerhard.

In the history of the resurrection I am much indebted to I. I. Hess, whose view has met my feelings best, though it has by no means been copied. Krummacher's "Lehrstimmen," I did not see till a considerable time after these meditations were finished. I have therefore no more borrowed from him than he from me. As to form, I have moved unshackled by the rules of pulpit composition. I hate the stiff, undeviating rules of all the rhetorical schools in the world, alike. They are so many mummeries, each representing the great writer or speaker of some period or other, while the eloquence of prophets and apostles soars with undying energies, and with ever new and varying beauties, like an eagle just below the stars. We ought to be free on this subject, and suffer our texts and subjects, the character of our audience, and our prayerful feelings to suggest the form of our messages to mind. So did the prophets and apostles. The circumstances under which these Meditations were written and delivered were various; now wars and a destructive plague surrounded us, and none only our mission families and a few pious natives composed the audience. Sometimes, (as in the Meditation entitled "Thomas's Conversion,") missionary brethren and sisters destined for other stations were present on their passage to the regions beyond us. A few times large audiences were assembled. Considerable intervals, occasioned by travelling and other circumstances, occurred likewise. This may account for some particular allusions, and perhaps for some defects, too, with which the reader will meet in these pages.

If some of our ministerial brethren in America should be led, in their public ministrations, to direct their attention more to the historical parts of the Bible, and by their more successful efforts should supersede the use of this little volume, the author would consider this a reward for his feeble attempt beyond his boldest expectations.

The history, too, of our Bible is precious above gold, and much fine gold and pearls and precious stones.

May God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, grant his blessing to the testimony of an unworthy servant, and take all the glory to himself forever.

W. G. SCHAUFFLER.

CONSTANTINOPLE, JAN. 14, 1836.



MEDITATIONS.

I.

CHRIST'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM.

JOHN XII, 12—19.

On the next day much people that were coming to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, Daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bear record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

Compare Matthew xxi, 1—11; Mark xi, 1—11; Luke xix, 29—44.

WITH the leave of Divine Providence, I have purposed, partly for my own instruction and edification, to deliver a course of sermons upon the last days of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, commencing with his solemn entrance into Jerusalem, as it is set forth in

the portions of Scripture which I have chosen for the text of this discourse. Nor will this be done without the edification of those who may hear me, provided divine assistance is vouchsafed to me, to give me an insight into the portions of holy writ which I may be called to handle, and to open the eyes of my understanding, that I may see “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I have formed this purpose for my *instruction*, I say; because there are various difficulties of different kinds attending this part of the history of Christ. These I shall endeavor to clear away by an exhibition of the events in their true order and connection, as they may appear after a careful examination of the harmony of the four evangelists, and by such other observations as may tend to throw light upon the sacred text. I have made it for my *edification*, because I am convinced that, unless I am altogether deserted from above — which may God in mercy avert! — such scenes as shall come before me cannot be contemplated without serious spiritual enjoyment and advantage. May it please Him, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, who himself is the living fountain, and in whose light alone we can see light, to give me such help, such insight and enjoyment in this my undertaking, as will show that it remains still true what his servant of old said of Him — “He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with

wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Is. xl.

Such is the interest thrown around the various scenes in the field of contemplation before me, that I hardly dare cast forward my looks, lest I should faint and relinquish my task as incapable even of the slightest approximation; lest, forgetting that the power of God is made perfect in weakness, I should exclaim, with Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

There it lies, the whole vast picture — rich, various, an unique combination of all that is just, good, holy, heavenly, divine, on the one hand; and all that is black, disgusting, and diabolical, on the other — the most interesting part of the most interesting history of our globe from the beginning to the end of time — the revealed light of Heaven mingling in contest with the smoke of the bottomless pit; divine love and forbearance and infernal hatred and outrage in close encounter — Heaven on the one side, hell on the other, and a wicked, perishing world in the centre, — the Lamb of God on the accursed tree; here a dying, penitent sinner; there an expiring, cursing wretch; believers dispersing, doubting, denying, swearing, repenting, weeping, recovering; high treason committed, and punished with unavailing sorrows and everlasting burnings; the world and hell in a shout of triumph, because Heaven is defeated and its hero slain; the everlasting interests of a world at stake and involved in impenetrable gloom for thirty-six hours; the heavens darkened, and the earth convulsed and shook out of her place; and, as the catastrophe of the whole, the

armies of hell routed, the main power of Satan broken, a divine dispensation closed forever; Christ reigning victorious; a new irrevocable covenant between God and repenting sinners established; songs of triumph in Heaven; the everlasting kingdom of our God and of his Christ commenced upon earth; and between these leading facts, numerous collateral circumstances, but even these, like stars of minor magnitude, each still a world by itself;— this is the sketch, these are the elements of the story before me, upon all of which to touch even in the most protracted course of sermons, would be counting the stars — an awful, fearful, delightful view !

But I must not indulge, for my own discouragement, in anticipations like these. I have chosen a text — I owe you an explanation of it, and it shall be deferred no longer. It was not without hesitation that I chose the first text and subject of my contemplated series of discourses. There are various points in the history of our Lord, which seemed almost to have equal claims with this. After all, however, my text struck me as being especially prominent, because it is the first public step which Christ took, to show his character, to meet his last trials, and to finish the work which his heavenly Father had given him to do on earth.

We shall at this time contemplate more particularly:

1. Christ setting out on his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem.
2. The rejoicing disciples.
3. The willing people.
4. The gainsaying Pharisees.
5. Jesus' tears.

I. It was towards the close of our Lord's ministry on earth, that the exasperation of the most influential among the pharisees, the scribes, and the elders of the Jews, rose to such a height as to render Jerusalem no longer a safe abode for him. The resurrection of Lazarus from the grave had filled the measure of their rage, and satisfied their minds that nothing short of the violent death of their formidable adversary could answer their purpose, and liberate them from the fearful apprehensions with which his growing popularity began to fill their bosoms. Down with him! So it echoed from mouth to mouth. Down with the Sabbath-breaker, the despiser of our venerable, sacred traditions, who dares to oppose council, sanhedrim, and high-priests, and to foil them by his continual, troublesome appeals "to the law and to the testimony." Down with him! though he cleanse all the lepers, heal all the sick, raise all the dead, comfort all the afflicted, feed all the poor, and save all the perishing souls from Dan to Beersheba. Down with him! for it is better that he and all the poor and sick perish throughout the land, than that our synagogue establishment should suffer, our craft get into disrepute, and our income cease.

On this account, when Christ returned for the last time to Jerusalem, his hour being not yet come, he stopped for some time at Ephraim, a city, or rather an obscure town, probably but a few miles north-east from Jerusalem, on the borders of the desert of Judah. (John xi, 59.) Six days, that is, as chronologists would have it, the Sabbath or Saturday before the passover, he came up from Ephraim to Bethany, where

Lazarus and his sister lived, to attend a supper, which seems to have been prepared for him in particular, and where Lazarus was one of the guests, Martha served, and Mary anointed Christ with precious ointment while he was reclining at the table. This is doubtless the same supper with that of which we read in Matthew xxvi, and Mark xiv, where Simon the leper is mentioned as the host. The apparent discrepancy between John and the two evangelists last alluded to, admits of such an easy and satisfactory solution, that it is astonishing how men of sense could ever have thought of two distinct suppers at Bethany, one before and one after the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem; at each of which Christ had been anointed by a woman; at each of which his disciples had rebuked the person urging the same plea for the poor and receiving the same answer from Christ — other obvious coincidences not to mention. That Matthew and Mark mention the supper *after* the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, while John introduces it as occupying the day before, will not appear strange, if we consider that Matthew does not aim at chronological order, but relates his facts upon the principle of some moral symmetry which he has in view. Mark frequently follows the same method from the same consideration. An attentive reading of these two evangelists will satisfy any one on the subject. All the objections which have been urged against the identity of these two suppers, are too trifling almost to deserve a refutation. One evangelist says, that the woman anointed the *feet* of Christ, and the other, that she anointed his *head*. And the easy reply is, that both are right, that neither de-

nies what the other asserts, and that both the head and the feet of Christ were anointed. Either was the practice on such occasions, as we may safely infer from Luke vii, 46. There, Christ says to the pharisee, in whose house he sat down to meat, and where also he was anointed by a woman of unhappy notoriety,* “*Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman has anointed my feet with ointment.*” And as this and the transposition of the narrative are the only differences between the evangelists, I maintain that John, Matthew, and Mark refer to the same supper, in which John keeps the order of time, and after having related this occurrence in its proper place, he goes on to state, that on the next day after the supper in Simon’s house, our Lord set out publicly to enter the royal city.

He set out from Bethany. Matthew makes the impression that he obtained his animal from Bethphage. These two places were both situated on the east of the mount of Olives, north-east from Jerusalem; and they were so near to each other, that Christ may have sent to Bethphage after having set out, himself, on foot from Bethany, — he, perhaps, passing up the mount of Olives with the people, while some of his disciples procured the animal. This latter appears to have been borrowed from a couple of men well inclined towards our Lord; for otherwise the commission of Christ, as well as the owners’ readiness to comply, as soon as they heard that “the Lord had need” of the creature, could not well be explained.

The ass is brought, and Christ proceeds up the as-

* Not Mary Magdalene, as some think ; her name is unknown.

cent, accompanied by a crowd of disciples, and a large number of people from abroad, who were come to the approaching feast, and who had visited Bethany to see Lazarus after his miraculous resurrection, glorifying God for all these displays of his power. As they approach the top of the mountain, the prospect widens; and what the weakness of the bodily senses cannot reach or discern, the charm of an imagination well acquainted with the sacred relics of the holy land, would, in the twinkling of an eye, gather within the compass of their horizon. In front, there lies the "mountain of the Lord's house" crowned with the royal city, the only, exclusive, earthly dwelling-place of the Most High. On the west, the great sea, whose mighty ships are one day, and perhaps soon, to bring back the dispersed of Israel from the four winds of Heaven, and whose remotest islands and shores are, ere long, to stretch out their hands unto Jehovah. Did one of the company chance to look back, — there was Jordan, the witness of divine power when Israel passed through it dry-shod, to take possession of the promised land, — and the Dead Sea, the emblem of God's wrath over all the incorrigible enemies of his word and work. On the south, there lay the birth-place of Him "whose goings forth are from old, from everlasting;" and dear Hebron, of sacred memory, was also near, the dwelling-place of Abraham the father of the faithful. It was a wonderful, soul-inspiring panorama of sacred places, witnesses of divine revelations, expositions, mercies, judgments, and wonders past numbering. And — what completed the sacred enthusiasm of the pious company — in the

midst of them was riding, upon an ass-colt, a mysterious man, with unassuming plainness, heaven in his countenance, of whose love and miraculous power the land was ringing again, and whose every step, word, look, and turn was but a new proof, that he moved in a more than human sphere. What wonder, then, if their feelings were enlarged, their hopes raised high, and their hearts filled with joy to overflowing. They look at him again. Is he not the promised, peaceful King of God's people? Yes, it is he! He it is, — or no one ever comes! They tear branches from the trees, and throw them into the way, as marks of their reverence and joy; they mind not their garments, — they spread them out into the dust, and as he rides away over them, they burst forth into a song, Hosanna to the Son of David! blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest — according as it is written, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold! thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”

II. But we must not overlook with whom the joy of our happy company to-day originated. This we learn from the evangelist Luke. “And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude *of the disciples* began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.” This main object of the triumphal march is now obtained. *The disciples* are now all convinced and sure the Messiah is among them. And (mark this) not the *worldly* conqueror,

bent on revenge and slaughter, but the peaceful Lord, the deliverer from all evil, the spiritual and everlasting King, whose kingdom is not of this world in the usual sense of the term. Their hearts overflow; they can refrain no longer; their feelings want utterance, and they burst forth; not into a wild cry of war and bloodshed; not into threatenings and imprecations against their enemies; nor into flattering encomiums of their new king; but into a sacred song of praise and prayer, in which angels might well have joined: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, which cometh in the name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven, and glory in the highest!" That their frame of mind was at least not altogether different from what our Lord wished it to be, is clear from the fact that He *indulged* and *encouraged* them himself. On other similar occasions he had withdrawn and hid himself, when the people endeavored to proclaim him Messiah, because *then* their minds were wholly unprepared, and their motives and expectations low and carnal. *Now*, seeing them in some measure prepared to enter into his views, he gives them occasion, himself, for doing so, by the most forcible allusion possible to the well-known prophecy in Zachariah ix.

To see Christ exalted and glorified is the chief delight of every true believer, and the ultimate object of all his prayers and efforts. To see him forgotten, neglected, and despised, mingles wormwood in the cup of his joy, and would make existence itself burdensome to him at last. But Christ is glorified and hon-

ored in the highest possible degree, when he can enter as the prince of life and peace, here into a heart, there into a family, a church and congregation, a city, or a land, and pour his rich and precious blessings freely over them. And hence his true friends are never happier than when they are permitted to precede and to follow him in his march, with the voice of rejoicing and triumph; when they see the people "willing in the day of his power," flocking to him "as clouds and as doves to their windows." They delight to be the helpers of the young convert's first love and first joy. They remember the time when they themselves were sitting in darkness; when the awakened conscience roared terribly in their guilty souls; when they wished to pray, but had no heart to it; when they wanted to "flee from the wrath to come," but their feet seemed to be rivetted to the ground; when they wished to make themselves better by good works, but grew worse every minute; when the heavens above them were as black as pitch, and as impenetrable as brass; when they longed to turn back to nought, but found themselves shut into existence by everlasting bars, and doomed to eternal consciousness by the decree of him who changeth not, though Heaven and earth pass away; when they wanted to curse the day of their birth, but feeling the guilt to be theirs, durst not indulge even that miserable gratification, and went away, broken-hearted, into the remotest corner, and sat down and wept sore and long. But while they are weeping, all at once, behold! a ray of light breaks through the darkness of their souls. Harken! a voice comes from above, — and O the blessed message! Rejoice greatly, O daugh-

ter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation. And they, shedding tears of joy, reply — Hosanna to the Son of David, who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest! They remember all this, I say, and they know that it is the appropriate glory of Christ, and his highest desire and delight, so to appear to perishing sinners when all else have forsaken them. They want that he should be filled with the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Nor can they rest easy until their consciences bear them witness that they are doing all they can to prepare his way, and that they are continually praying for his coming.

III. The *disciples* have no sooner tuned their voices to the sacred song, than the *people* join them — a delightful chorus. They cut branches from the surrounding trees, and spread them into the way; they spare not their very garments. A foretaste of celestial joy absorbs every other thought throughout the whole company. This is the regular course of things. When *Christians* wake up, the *people* rejoice; while *Christians* slumber, the *people* will continue in the road to death. Exceptions to this rule are rare.

It is delightful to see the people *willing* in the day of God's power, crowding around Christ. But there is still a thought which not unfrequently casts a veil over the scene. They are *willing*; but O that they were *determined* to serve Christ! Not your *garments* he wants, but your *hearts*! Not your willingness to rejoice in his light; your fixed, immoveable purpose to be his forever. This is what he wants, and what alone

will make Christians of you, and save you. Nor is the distance between a *willingness* to be a Christian and a *determination* to be one, trifling. It is enormous! Angels cannot tell the number of those who perished, with all the *willingness* in the world, to be saved, — simply because *firmness of purpose* was wanting.

I will do no wrong to our willing people to-day. I do not believe, as many do, that this body of men, who are now singing hosanna, were the very same ones who, a few days after, roared out, “Crucify him! crucify him!” Ours is a company of strangers, who came to the feast; and having heard of Lazarus’ resurrection from the grave, went out to see him, and rejoiced, and glorified God. They are well disposed people; and being strangers, and dispersed in the large city among friends and acquaintances, they could hardly have received information of what was going on in that darkest of all nights, when Christ was betrayed and condemned to death. And the first word which probably most of them heard of it was, that the young Rabbi was condemned to death, and just hurrying to the place of execution. But the clamorous crowd before Pilate’s door was chiefly from the mob of Jerusalem, well known, and in their interests wedded to the high priests and Pharisees; and they were probably called together by some special effort of these ecclesiastical dignitaries. For these cautious assassins expressly said, “Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people;” and they pressed on all the night to accomplish their purpose with the most unheard-of anxiety and vigor.

Still, there were doubtless among our *willing* people many with whom the divine word and divine joys fell into stony ground, and having not root, withered in the time of offence and persecution. There were those whose hearts had begun to be overrun with the thorns and briers of worldly cares and plans, or were becoming hard, like the broad highway of honor, wealth, and pleasure, "which leadeth unto death." Now they rejoice and are nigh to the kingdom of Heaven; they are willing. But many of them wanting depth, singleness of purpose and determination, they soon faint, and give it all up again; and this day of high religious privilege, instead of becoming a blessing to them, will prove a curse and a condemnation forever. Still, *some* of our happy company to-day, who perhaps never before had sung hosanna to the Son of David, are doubtless now singing his nobler praise in the world above. May the number of such be great! And may we learn of them the value of an unperverted, plain good sense, and of openness to the truth, which often prepare the way of Christ in our hearts; while artificial minds, thrown out of balance by an overstock of earthborn knowledge, such as we shall meet with under the next head, are sure to meet with the doom of reprobation.

IV. No class of men, it seems, followed Christ more perseveringly in his ministrations, than the Pharisees. Where he is, there they are also. Even here, on the top of the solitary mount of Olives, they are present, with no profit or pleasure, either to themselves, or to anybody else. Methinks I can see them standing on some elevation along the road, to see the fanatical, uninstructed people pass by, while they

wisely shake their heads at their extravagance. They affect to despise those who accompany Christ, and yet they are again and again anxious for their perishing cause, and say to one another, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." And when they hear the people bursting out into hosannas, they can contain themselves no longer, but addressing Christ while he is passing by, they exclaim, "Master, rebuke thy disciples;" to which Christ replies, "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out!"

The Pharisees do not appear here, as in other instances, in the character of self-righteous men in *particular*, for this besetting sin of theirs was not especially called into exercise in the present instance. They appear to me to act simply as a set of distant, cold-hearted men, whose deep-rooted prejudices did not permit them to sympathize with the feelings of the people who surrounded Christ. The Pharisees were a studious class of men, who had enough to do to master the enormous mass of their traditions, some of which are by no means destitute of interest. Their heads were well stored with such knowledge as their age afforded, and their hearts enjoyed a degree of self-confidence far outstripping the extent of their mental acquisitions, as is usually the case with learned men who are destitute of true religion. They *had* everything, and *knew* everything; and were quite prepared to master all the world, while they themselves had no idea of making any new experience, or admitting any truth which they could not draw from their own fountain.

There is an unhappy and spoiled class of studious

and cultivated men, called literary, who, by an undue and disproportioned cultivation of the *intellect*, have so far killed every affection of the *heart*, as to be unwilling, and at last naturally *unable*, to go with their feelings one inch farther than the most common relations of life would necessarily carry a man. For the other world and its realities they have *sylogisms* enough, but no *affections*. In *speculating* on these things, they will go with any one to any length to which their powers can stretch, and they will be delighted with the most hair-splitting and unpractical sophisms on the subjects of *God*, *eternity*, *immortality*, *personal identity*, *moral accountability*, etc. etc. But as for *feeling*, they are the very last men. Repentance? Ah! that will do for vicious people. Faith? Oh yes! for the illiterate, who are groping in the darkness of vulgar ignorance, faith is necessary indeed, and a very excellent thing to keep them steady. But for such men as we! Regeneration, communion with God and heavenly things, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost! Oh intolerable mysticism! And what makes the condemnation of these ruined men the surer, is that they are usually *moral people*. Close habits of study and severe application are utterly inconsistent with sensual indulgences, and in all common cases preclude immoral and licentious habits. Hence they are fully satisfied that they are right, and every idea which they cannot reach with the scale and dividers of their philosophy, is folly; every exercise of devotion which does not grow in the sandy desert of their own experience, is fanaticism; and every religious feeling which they do not find in the ice-house of their unfeeling hearts, is nonsense and

extravagance. They have built up for themselves a system; and because that system is *harmonious with itself*, they most vainly and unphilosophically suppose that it must needs be *true too*; and thus they confidently venture their souls and all eternity upon it. But it is one thing for a theory to be *consistent*, and quite another thing to be *true*. And if it should turn out to be fact, that their theory is *false*, and *that* of the Bible true, (and their own philosophy recognizes this tremendous possibility) they are undone forever! But they have no idea they can be wrong. In times of religious excitement, they smile, they wonder, and gainsay, and perish; and if Christ himself were present, they would have no hesitation to pass their sage sentence upon his character, superciliously to reprove his conduct, and to teach him how to wield and manage the helm of the church. They wish for no teaching from above; they shut themselves out from the privilege of any new spiritual experiences, and make themselves voluntarily a kind of intellectual brute beasts, unfit for that sanctuary above, where "Holiness to the Lord" is written upon every vessel, and where nothing but the absolute perfection which Christ possesses and bestows has currency and value.

V. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within

thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

They had probably passed the brook of Cedron by this time, and began to ascend towards the gate next to the temple, — to which, on account of the utter confusion that reigns on the subject of the order in which the gates of ancient Jerusalem should be located, I dare assign no particular name. Nor is this of any consequence. They are now about entering the city. The road begins to be crowded; the buzz of the multitude, partly natives of Jerusalem, and partly strangers who were present on account of the approaching feast, all thronging the streets and the gates, now break upon the ear. What could be more apt to remind Christ of that period when Jerusalem, crowded *to overflowing*, would become the theatre of wars, intestine and foreign, civil and religious, of famine, disease, fire, theft, highway robbery, assassination, cannibalism, treason, revenge, despair and blasphemy, and at last of utter destruction, so as actually to admit of no parallel, either in sacred or profane history. The very preparation of the people for a *holy season*, the *cheerfulness* and the high flow of spirits they indulged in, must have deepened the gloom of the dismal picture presented to his mind.

He looked up to the unhappy city, whose last ray of glory was now about to be extinguished, which was herself just sealing her doom by neglecting the time of her last visitation of mercy. He looked up, and wept. How eminently he was the master of his emotions and his tears, and how sparing with the latter,

we have more proofs than we need in his history. The sight of Gethsemane, as he passed it a few minutes before, drew no tear from his eyes; the sight of Jerusalem breaks his heart. In the presence of a gazing multitude, a flood of tears rolls down his cheeks, and out of the abundance of his tender heart his mouth speaketh, overflowing with sentiments of compassion. The sins of this rebellious and untoward generation, "stiffnecked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears," though they reached to the very heavens, seemed to be forgotten; their approaching ruin is all he can now realize. They are ready to murder him; but oh! how can his heart bear to dwell on his *own sufferings*, when the gathering storm of hail, mingled with fire, prepares to pour upon his guilty people. Ah! to suffer is dreadful, but to suffer *guilty, infinitely guilty*, as they did, is to have a foretaste of the terrors of the reprobate souls of the damned.

When I think of the moment when he burst out into weeping, his eyes uplifted, suffused with tears, tears rolling down his countenance unrestrained, trickling down upon his garments; when I read his words and think of the thrill of his faltering voice, of the workings of his heart, and the heavings of his breast; and then converge all the other circumstances to one point to form a perfect image of that love, — and then to draw it, — my pen drops from my hand, — I dare not approach the task. To pull off my shoes on this holy ground is not enough; I want to be meditating with my face pressed down into the deepest dust.

He wept over the woes of a *single city*; and do you think that he never wept over the woes of a *world*?

He wept in public, where he would certainly restrain his feelings as much as possible; and do you think he never wept in secret? Could we lift the sacred veil of his solitary hours; of his seasons of retirement, while an obscure workman of Nazareth; of his forty days of fasting and prayer in the wilderness; of his vigils on the mountain-tops and in the deserts; what prayers, what intercessions, what tears, what tender and heavenly sympathies, with the sorrows and woes of humanity, would come to light! His affections were not limited to Judea; he did not love those merely who loved him. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, and over the distress of Martha and Mary; and why not over the great congregation of the dead of more than a hundred and thirty generations past, and over all the broken hearts of widows and starving orphans from the beginning of the world? Why not over the distress of all the sick, the delirium of the deranged, the agonies of the dying? Do you now see why he went about with restless assiduity to console, to comfort, to bind up broken hearts, raising the dead, curing and cleansing and restoring men to the enjoyment of health, sight, hearing, and reason? How could he do otherwise with a heart like his? He would have done so, though no man had believed in him on that account, or returned to him a grateful word or look.

But if he wept over the *miseries* of Jerusalem, much more must he have mourned over their *impenitence*. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" Indeed, *this* was the sole cause of their ultimate ruin. He says expressly that all these horrors would over-

take them, "because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." The measure of their guilt was fast filling up; the disregarded tears and entreaties of Christ sealed their doom; and from the time of his death to the sacking of Jerusalem and the dissolution of the state, they went down with rapid declination. Like a rock that has long been projecting on some lofty mountain top, but now rolls down through the wild forest and over opposing hills, fences, and dwellings, every obstacle adding strength to its restless precipitation, until it has reached the bottom of the unvisited gulf, or the deep sea below, leaving nothing behind save the forcible illustration of that swift destruction which overtakes "wickedness in high places."

Have you never seen the starving wretch, who with unusual skill, information, and enterprise sails through seas, and roams, like the evil spirit in Job, up and down in the earth, attempting everything, and whose whole life is but one unbroken chain of failures, until, shivering with cold and half naked, he begs at the door of the ignorant but godly farmer, whom formerly he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flock? Who is he? "Lo, this is the man," says David, "that made not God his strength." In nine cases out of ten, a secret curse will be cleaving to his fugitive heels; the tears of a pious mother, or a deserted godly wife are burning upon his soul; the dying groans of seduced, unwary youths, of ruined innocence, and the sighs and sorrows of decrepit, starving, degraded parents give him no rest,—the curse of God has become his inseparable shadow, and the very atmosphere in which he lives and moves. Every

cheerful sunbeam seems to disclose his hidden crimes, every growling thunder to utter the sentence of his deed of darkness. But with all this, he may repent, return, and live, if he has never heard the voice of Christ; if he never knew him; and he is unspeakably happier than that undone, forlorn soul, who neglected the day of heavenly visitation, upon whom the tears of a *despised Saviour* rest with insufferable weight, and who, reprobate, and given over like Judas, “chooses strangling rather than life,” and the reality of eternal ruin, rather than its dreadful anticipation. Oh! it is terrible to fall into the hand of the living God! Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us and know our thoughts; and see if there be any evil way in us; and lead us into the way which is everlasting.

“And when Jesus was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet, of Nazareth of Galilee.” “And Jesus entered into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.”

Here finishes the account of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem. May God grant his blessing upon this imperfect meditation, and may Jesus enter into the heart of each one of us! AMEN.

MEDITATIONS.

II.

“FATHER, GLORIFY THY NAME.”

JOHN XII, 20—32.

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh, and telleth Andrew; and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from Heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, an angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

THE fact that the Evangelist St. John introduced the occurrence related in our text, immediately after the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, seems to indicate that it happened very soon after it, — probably the day

following. The scene of our text was, in my opinion, the temple itself, where our Lord seems to have spent most of the time during the last week of his earthly career. According to St. Luke "He taught the people in the temple and preached the Gospel" in "those days." "The blind and the lame came to him into the temple and he healed them," says Matthew; and "the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David!" A very considerable number of parables, of controversial dialogues, and of hortatory addresses, all delivered in the temple, fell within these few laborious days of our Lord's life; and were we to treat upon them all separately, our series of discourses would necessarily be extended to a most immoderate length. But having purposed to confine ourselves to what our Lord *did*, and *suffered* in those days, we shall not be chargeable with inconsistency, if we leave the explanation and application of what He *said* to others, or defer it to some future season.

The event in our text falls perhaps most properly into the sphere of our meditations, although it does consist in a great degree of *sentiments uttered* by our Lord, and not of deeds or sufferings. I am, however, so much the more unwilling to bring it under a category, which would throw it out of our contemplated series of discourses; as the sentiments which it brought to light are of the most unrivalled beauty and importance, and the whole occurrence in the highest degree profitable and practical.

I shall not, as I am in the habit of doing, divide the present discourse into several heads, for fear the spirituality of my text might suffer through the confinement of rule and form. We shall pass over the text as it is, and stop at such places as afford peculiar scope for meditation.

It was then during one of those interesting seasons, while Christ was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the Gospel, the people listening with undivided attention to his gracious words, the high priests and scribes standing aloof, pale with anxiety and indignation, and the children singing hosanna; it was during one of those few unequalled days, when the Saviour stood in the temple amid the poor, the blind, the deaf, the maimed, the halt, and the wretched of every description, healing, comforting, pouring health and life and joy around, though his own heart was groaning secretly with gloomier forebodings than man can conceive; it was during one of those scenes of mingled and absorbing interest, that certain Greeks, among them that came up to worship at the feast, "came to Philip which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus." They accosted Philip, either because he happened to be most accessible to them in the crowd, or most likely because, he being a Galilean Jew, they felt more boldness towards him, if indeed they were not previously acquainted with him. They address this common Jew respectfully, "Sir,"—and express their modest desire to "see Jesus" with truly beautiful and winning simplicity.

"Sir, we would see Jesus!" How delightful!

Should not one's heart leap with joy at such a request? What Christian would not, in the midst of a thousand other pressing engagements, pay at once the most cheerful and undivided attention to such lovely, interesting inquirers? "Sir, we would see Jesus!" Well done! The most blessed desire that ever sprang up in a mortal's breast. Oh! if we could but hear this question addressed to us, this melancholy place with all its gathering storms, yea, the very wilderness of eternal ice, or eternal sand, would instantaneously bud and blossom as Carmel and as Sharon. You would see Jesus? Good! You shall see him! would be the joyful echo of our hearts; and as Philip run forthwith to Andrew, and they both crowd their way farther on to Jesus, to tell him of it, when he was in the very midst of preaching and healing, — so should we communicate the glad tidings to each other. — This man, that family, would see Jesus, — and with united hearts should we bring the blessed petition to the throne of his grace.

But ah! a long and melancholy sigh heaves my bosom, and I cannot help it. Where are those inquirers? where are they? Who would see Jesus? I must stop; for if I proceed my remarks must instantly become personal. We turn to our Greeks.

It is delightful to observe the anxiety with which these *strangers* endeavor to seize the fleeting hour of peculiar religious privilege, and the modesty with which they request a *minute* of interrupted intercourse with the *despised* and *humble* Jesus. What shame and guilt does not their conduct reflect upon those, who bear the honorable name of *Christians*, and who might enjoy the most *uninterrupted* and *peculiar familiarity*

with the *exalted* and *glorified* Jesus; but who neglect nothing so much and so gladly, as to see him in the closet, or to meet him and his people in the solemn assembly of his house. *You* would rather not see Jesus, ye despisers of his love. You want no interview with him. But, depend upon it, you *will* have an interview with him ere long, when neither business nor pleasure, neither mountains nor rocks will hide you from his heart-dissolving looks; when neither the buzz and laughter of a crazy world, nor the sound of the viol and the timbrel in your feasts will drown the thunder of his voice. Then you will see him, whether you “would” or not; and he who now speaks in the harmonious accents of dying love to save you, will utter the sentence of your endless ruin in peals of thunder which will shake the frame-work of the universe.

According to the best critics, these Greeks were Greeks by birth, and not hellenistic Jews, as some have supposed. They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. They came *from far* to worship at Jerusalem, and humbly to seek the acquaintance of Christ, while high priest, pharisees, scribes, and other Jews *at* Jerusalem were standing coldly and proudly at a distance; yea, while they were in the very act of preparing for the blackest of all crimes ever committed under the sun; and while Judas was standing perhaps nearest to his Lord with the very shame of hell maturing in his breast.

External religious privileges are an earnest, either of uncommon glory and exaltation in Heaven, or of uncommon condemnation and suffering in hell. Abraham saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced; and he rejoices

now, and his joy will never cease. Balam saw the day of Christ, and with an aggravated condemnation he went to receive the reward of iniquity. The higher the station, the deeper the fall. Man fell—into the slough of sin; Lucifer fell—into the “bottomless pit.” So did John, Peter, Nicodemus, Nathaniel, and others see Christ,—and Annas saw him too, and Caiaphas and Herod, and Pilate, and Judas; but the doom of the latter ones was enhanced by the privilege they had enjoyed, more than human calculation can express. And what then was true, is true still! Trust brings with it responsibility, and when betrayed it brings guilt; and many a savage, who knows no more of Christ than what he may have retained from a single sermon of some passing missionary, may get a place in the “temple not made with hands,” while thousands from the very heart of Christendom, with their heads full of earth-born wisdom, and their hearts full of folly, with their neglected Bibles in their left and with “a lie” in their “right hand,” will go down to the mansions of evergrowing wickedness and pain, whither Hope and Mercy never descend, and where pale Despair and raging Madness have fixed forever their red-hot thrones.

The modesty and anxiety of our inquiring Greeks would, under any other circumstances, have been the most favorable introduction to our Lord. But now it was too late—for *private interviews* at least, too late. That our Lord did *not* admit these Greeks, I infer from the circumstance that no mention is made of their introduction to him, and chiefly from verse 27, which contains such sentiments as he would hardly have addressed to strangers. Moreover, the whole strain of

his remarks was too highly spiritual to suit the comprehension of the most sincere *beginners* in religion, — and such, no doubt, our strangers were.

The time of familiar intercourse was fast passing away with our Lord, the work of his *ministry* was hastening to its close, to give room to his still higher office of *mediation* between God and man, through the sacrifice of himself in behalf of a fallen world.

As Philip and Andrew, therefore, bring the request of our strangers before Jesus, they receive substantially the following reply, indirect indeed, but equally profound and comprehensive in point of import. I cannot see these dear men, for “the hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.” My hardest and noblest work now begins, — that of redeeming love. I, who in the beginning spake, and it was; at the breath of whose mouth worlds, immense and countless to human sense and reason, started on their enormous revolutions with a rapidity which derides every stretch of thought; around the lowest steps of whose throne stars and suns floated like the small “dust of the balance;” for the performance of whose sovereign pleasure the whole multitude of angels, powers, principalities, and dominions stood in humble readiness, each with holy emulation craving the privilege of my lowest service; I now shall *serve*, suffer and die, freely, compelled by nothing save my own choice, my own love for sinners. As in power, wisdom, and justice, so in love I must, I will be first in Heaven and on earth. I, clothed in human flesh, shall suffer the punishment due to a rebellious world. The Son of Man, the Son of God will be glorified. He will be glorified in his

sufferings and in his *death*, which will show his love supreme, will force the last entrenchment of Satan, and create, not a *material* and *finite* world from *nothing*, but a SPIRITUAL and EVERLASTING CREATION from FAR LESS than nothing,—from an enormous minus quantity of sin and corruption. The Son of Man shall be glorified *after his death*, when he shall resume, dressed in human nature, his omnipotence, and rule as Creator, Preserver and Redeemer.

“The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified” in the same mysterious way of previous death, in which all sublunary things pass on to life and being. Here, there is no light without shade, no victory without conflict, no rest without labor, no satisfaction without want, no life without death. When the proud rejoicing lion is torn to pieces and rotten, then meat comes forth from the eater, and sweetness from the strong. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,” and when the flesh of the just is mouldering in the cold grave, then his redeemed and sanctified soul, like the pure white lily from the moor, rises to bloom forever in the paradise of God. Let, therefore, these men mark the following great truth, and it will be better for them than all the interviews which I would give them at present. “He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life, shall keep it.” “And if (they or) any (other) man will serve me, let him (and them) follow me.” *Then they will* have an interview with me, though it be not now; for “where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man will serve me, him will my Father honor.”

“ Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!” Oh the folly and madness of the world, who hunt after greatness, preferment, wealth, and pleasure, in the sweat of their brow, and to the unavoidable ruin of their souls! If the words of Christ be true, if the death of our own lusts and desires is the way to life, then they hunt for death, they hunt for eternal shame, poverty, and pain.

Thus far the reply of Christ to the Greeks of our text; and what important practical lesson it did contain for the rest of the people about him *then*, and still *does* contain to all of us *now*, is too plain to need any farther explanation.

Another scene opens. Christ had no sooner given his answer, than he feels his mind drawn to the contemplation of his own future sufferings; and being accustomed to follow those inward hints which he knew to be from above, he does not suppress his rising emotions. The Father had decreed to give one more audible testimony to his beloved Son, and for this the way was now to be paved. It may be his eye lighted upon Judas, or upon the priests, pharisees and scribes in their corner, and an association of ideas brought instantly before him the gathering storm of his approaching passion: or, the admiring, rejoicing multitude and the children singing hosanna, reminded him by way of contrast of the contempt and hateful spite which would but too soon be poured upon him, and of the dreadful “Crucify! Crucify him!” which, shouted by a ruthless mob, would stun his hearing;—and fear and misgiving, natural to most untarnished humanity, fill

his bosom. His feelings demand utterance, and he cannot and will not hide them. "Now is my soul troubled." The devout attention of this multitude, the songs of these innocent lambs of my dear flock, and the modest and interesting request of those godly strangers, are gratifying to me; but oh! I look but a step before me, and darkness, darker than Egyptian night, covers my path, and my very *soul* melts with fear. Oh that that dreadful hour were past! But, what shall I say? Shall I plead exemption from it? Shall I wish to enjoy even the most *lawful* comfort, when, by denying it, the conquest over the prince of this world may be completed, the glory of my Father in Heaven promoted, and this perishing world saved? Are not these very sufferings the great object of my coming in the flesh? Yes! "For this cause came I unto this hour." Then let it come upon me; and let all my desires, and wishes, however lawful and proper,—let all my own interests (for even pure human nature has some)—let all my thoughts and feelings be lost in the all-absorbing petition, "Father, glorify thy name!"

Thus Christ. Ye, who have a sense for things heavenly and divine, behold and admire the workings of a holy mind. Behold the logic of Heaven, and the most unexampled illustration of the moral sentiment which will never be sufficiently admired—"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Shall we again consult our own interests? Can we, while this model of all perfection is before us on the pages of sacred history? We should be anything but Christians, if we could. But we cannot—we *will* not. In all our ways and works we will confess with the spirit of holiness

and of love only. In the eyes of the world we may appear as losing our lives,—but we shall find them again unto life eternal.

The great object of our Lord's coming was the expiatory sacrifice necessary for the redemption of sinners. "For this cause came I unto this hour." By this the separating wall between God and the sinner is done away, and every believer's eternal interests secured. He who has begun the work of our redemption *for* us, will complete it also *in* us; and the only and all-absorbing task of our lives is the delightful one of doing his will, and glorifying his name, out of gratitude for our soul's salvation. Doing this, we shall act in the spirit and from the principle of Jesus in the elevated occurrence of our text. And for this cause he has acted as it were publicly, that we may behold him and admire and imitate his example. This is directly enjoined upon us by his apostles. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "We have the mind of Christ" exclaims the same apostle. Every man whose ruling affections, whose prayers and actions do not close in with the great petition of Christ, "Father, glorify thy name!" is no Christian; and his hope will prove a spider's web in the day when God shall take away his soul. This is the great dividing line between converted and unconverted men. No man can seek

two things supremely. He that seeks himself supremely is an unconverted man, and he that seeks the glory of God supremely is a converted man. It is clearer than noonday; who can deny it?

“Then came there a voice from Heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by and heard it, said that it thundered; others said an angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.”

Nothing can be more insipid than the idle conjecture of some, that the voice spoken of in our text, was thunder, which John, taking it for a sign of God's complacency with the petition of our Lord, interpreted as meaning, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. A refutation in form would be too gratuitous to be attempted here. I merely ask, Did God never manifest himself in a sensible manner? Shall we mock the very pages of the soberest history,—not to say of holy writ? Was there a thunder-storm at the baptism of Christ, when a voice was heard down from Heaven, saying, “This is my beloved son?” Then the Holy Spirit, coming down visibly and *remaining* on Christ, was a flash of lightening,—was it? Was there a thunder-storm on mount Tabor, when Christ had that memorable and protracted interview with Moses and Elijah, when his own garments and countenance were transformed, and shining, and when the testimony “this is my beloved son” was repeated! Was there a thunder-storm in that bush on mount Horeb, which Moses saw burning yet unconsumed, from which he heard *words*, to which words he replied, received back again

answers, commands, promises, reproofs, and long enough to fill up the whole third and half of the fourth chapter of Exodus? Was there a thunder-storm on Sinai, when, under the most magnificent and terrific display of the divine presence, six hundred thousand men, most of them not favorably disposed, heard with their own ears the ten commandments, word after word, pouring down over the barren rocks like an ocean of sounds, and rolling in lowering billows over the lonely desert, with majestic and fearful reverberation, until their very souls were melted, and their strength exhausted, and they compelled to exclaim, Let us not hear again the voice of Jehovah our God, neither let us see this great fire any more, that we die not? Was there a thunder-storm in the tabernacle at Shiloh, when God called four times ‘Samuel, Samuel,’ and after the fourth time, when Samuel answered, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth,” communicated to him minutely the long train of punishments which were to overtake the house of Eli? Believe these idle conjectures who can. We find it both easier and more reasonable to believe the unexceptionable testimony of Scripture. If the doubts of “unreasonable and wicked men” must have such power of demonstration, we deplore their condition, and prefer to believe “the witness of God!” But there appear to be men, who are really reprobate to the faith and who cannot believe though one should rise from the dead; and upon whom nothing short of the unquenchable fire will fasten conviction. So some of the people in our text say, it thundered, it is no matter; this is nothing supernatural, or particular; there may

be a thunder-storm somewhere in the atmosphere. Others, more candid, said an angel spake to him.

Permit me a few remarks on the general subject of God's revelations to mankind. If it is of any consequence for man to know God, it may be expected of him, as of a benevolent and omnipotent Being, that he would leave nothing untried to *make* himself known to him, and that he would pour in light unto men's minds by every door and window, cleft and opening, all over the frame of their sensitive, intellectual, and moral nature,—only, of course, so as not to destroy their moral free agency. And so he has done. God has manifested himself to the *moral* nature of man by an uncontrolable conscience, which warns, rebukes, chastises, threatens with a future, everlasting, and righteous retribution; and sometimes, if not listened to and obeyed, drives men to despair; thus commencing retribution already here. God has manifested himself to the *intellectual* nature of man, by impressing upon their minds the consciousness of his own existence in such a manner, that while they can find no syllogism to demonstrate it, they are equally unable to deny it, or to rid themselves of it in any way, and that after ten thousand efforts of the first intellects, on either side of the question, they are compelled to lay down their *offensive* and *defensive* weapons at the steps of his sovereign throne, and to confess, the idea of God is a first and universal truth, which needs no proof, and fears no refutation. But most men listen neither to *conscience* nor to *reason*. It was therefore necessary that God should manifest himself to their *senses* also. This he did, *first*, in the wonderful works of nature, in their

magnitude, the regularity of their laws, their adaptation to innumerable, reasonable, and benevolent ends, and their constant preservation; and secondly, in order to leave nothing untried which could be done without wholly abolishing the dispensation of *faith*, or destroying man's free agency; he manifested himself to their senses by *occasional, extraordinary occurrences* in nature, or in the history of mankind; occurrences not capable of being traced back to the ordinary laws of nature, or the common concatenation of events. And these extraordinary exhibitions of his existence and power he showed forth in every part of creation, to impress us with the great truth, that *he is*, and that he is *Lord of ALL*. If any one will take the trouble to collect and to class the miraculous displays of God's power during the times of the Old and the New Dispensation, all of which are well attested, he will obtain an imposing picture of miracles, extending to every part of creation, and the symmetry and rationality of which at once demonstrate the identity and the wisdom of the Author. Through some thousands of years there comes down a chain of supernatural effects, wrought in the clear noon-day light, before friends and foes, and which exhibit themselves in rocks, in metals, in the earth, the water, the atmosphere; in fire, in plants, fishes, reptiles, birds, four-footed beasts; in men, in their bodies and their minds; in the luminaries of Heaven; and which addressed themselves to the taste, smell, touch, sight, and hearing of all under whose observation they fell, and are now handed down to us, and will be handed down to the end of time, with such clear and strong evidence as would give them before

any regular bar of justice all the power of regular, unexceptionable, and conclusive testimony; so that, if a man resists now, he must not only disregard the voice of conscience and the light of reason, but also in reality his five senses; i. e. he must resist all the evidence which can be given him, from the very nature of his own constitution, and he must bid defiance to God in Heaven to convince him by anything short of the irresistible arm of his omnipotence.

Yet this is no uncommon thing. Some of the people in our text say, It thundered:—and the far greater part of Christendom, in reading in the books of nature, of history, of Providence, and in the Bible, of the mercies and judgments of God, give themselves no more concern about them, than they would about the dying sound of some distant summer cloud. The harmony of creation and its countless blessings, the most destructive revolutions of nature, the overturning of kingdoms, the deliverance of countries, islands and nations from the thralldom of heathenism, and their conversion to the Christian faith, individual conversions, and judgments in their own immediate vicinity,—all leave the stupid infidelity of carnal men alike untouched. Unbelief cannot receive instruction, but only punishment. They hear neither Moses nor the prophets, neither Christ nor the apostles, neither conscience nor reason, nor the five senses, nor the voice of history; nor would they believe, if one of the dead should rise; nor would they if the very gates of eternity should be thrown open, and the boundless region of spirit pour upon their senses the whole mass of its unnumbered population. But it will not be so always. When they shall

be with the "rich man" in the flames, and lift up their eyes, "being in torment," *they will believe.*

Christ enters into no dispute with the Jews; but after assuring them that this voice was nevertheless come for their sakes, that they might believe, he goes on to say, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Who "the prince of this world" is, may easily be gathered from John xiv, 3; and xvi, 11; 2 Cor. iv, 4; and Eph. vi, 12. &c. It is Satan, beyond reasonable dispute. About the meaning of his being "cast out," some latitude of opinion must be granted, as we have no means of ascertaining its precise import. My conviction is, that it has reference to some signal overturn of Satan's power, occasioned by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, by which fallen humanity was brought nearer to God, and in some serious respects brought into comparative liberty from the influence and power of the evil one. I will not insist upon the somewhat doubtful subject of heathen oracles — the utter silence of some, and the rapid decline of all, soon after the crucifixion of Christ. The fact is asserted by many church-fathers; Lucan, a heathen writer, laments the silence of the Delphic oracle, the most famous perhaps, no more than thirty years after the death of our Lord; and Plutarch wrote a whole book on the subject of dumb oracles, in which book he endeavors not to refute, but merely to account for, the cessation of oracular responses; and this by theories which do little honor to his penetration. Now, if Satan is engaged in ruining the souls of men, as the Bible unquestionably asserts,

who can doubt that he had a hand in that great engine of deception, either through natural or supernatural means? And if the cessation of a machine, at a time when it was most needed to keep up idolatry, cannot well be accounted for from facts and circumstances known, it certainly becomes considerably probable, that the curtailing of Satan's power may have been its chief cause.

Very consonant with this would be another fact, upon which I should insist much more. I mean the cessation of demoniacal possessions after the death of Christ, which, at the time of his coming and before, were so numerous, and against the reality of which no valid argument has yet been advanced. Matthew speaks of the resurrection of many "saints which slept," who came out of their graves after the death of Christ, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many; and Peter twice intimates (1 Peter, iii, 19, 20. and iv. 6,) that something took place then in the region of the dead, not unlike to the preaching of the Gospel here, settling the eternal destinies of some souls, whose doom could not be fixed before that great period. All this leads to the supposition that a mighty revolution was produced by the Saviour's death in the world of spirits, Satan in a sense judged, and his power broken.

Unto us, however, it suffices to know, for the understanding of this passage, that by the cross of Christ the empire of Satan was overturned and will be overturning till he whose right it is shall rule from the rising to the setting sun. To us it suffices to know, that although the gospel did not, and does not enjoy the use of any carnal weapons; although the systems of

idolatry were, at the time of Christ and afterwards, guarded by the power and influence of emperors, kings, and princes; although its foul deformities were already then carefully covered by philosophers and hierarchs with the saintly veil of allegories and spiritualising comments ; although its more intelligent votaries, feeling themselves rather unsafe in the decaying outworks of course polytheism, had made a dextrous retreat into the inner entrenchments of esoteric philosophies ; although every imaginable spring and wheel was put into requisition to keep up the cause and kingdom of Satan : yet, the simple story of the cross *did* overturn the whole stupendous fabric from the bottom, and made havoc of the arch-fiend's combined forces, both in the political and the literary world, until, in all places to which its voice extended, every idol was prostrated, and every strong-hold forced and razed to the ground. Heathen Rome, with its countless temples, fell; and great was the fall of it. Touched by the stone cut out without hands, the precipitation of its ruin was majestic and tremendous. Down it came, like a mountain of dust before the storm. While its civil patrons gnashed their teeth, and its apologists affected to smile at the tale of the gospel which they could not refute, the chariot wheels of the king of kings drove over their necks and put them to everlasting silence. And ever since, the assaults of the adversaries to pull down the pretended Jewish superstition of this doctrine, have rebounded upon them with double fury, while the cross of Christ has ever come forth from the contest like the sun from behind the impure smoke of angry volcanoes, and remains ever fresh in

loveliness and strength, the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” As in general, so in particular, the doctrine of the cross is the most formidable weapon which can be used against the empire of darkness; for, in its nobler contest with the conscience and the sensibilities of man, it levels at the rebellious heart the most overcoming appeals which exist in the whole storehouse of moral suasion. There is a class of men possessed of independent minds, who have actually intrepidity enough to brave eternal retributions, and to bear up under the most terrific denunciations of the broken law of God. How their temper will hold out after death, this is another question; but here it often does hold out. This is a trait of character by no means laudable, — for it is not courage, but madness; it is not manly independence, but rebellion against God. But still, it involves a degree of vigor and firmness, which, if they were better employed, would reflect much honor upon the character of their possessor, and tend to make him eminently useful. Now, if there be yet left in the heart of such a man a spark of sensibility, and if the Gospel be preached to him in all its freeness, the cross in all its beauty, and the love of Christ in all its power, — you may depend upon it, he is overcome. Ashamed of himself, he will submit; he cannot, he would not be *so base, so ungrateful* as to spurn a love, an affection, a sacrifice so free, so generous, so overcoming. He is a Christian from that moment, and will henceforward employ all his powers

to stem the flood of wickedness which rolls over this earth, and use all the firmness and independence of his now sanctified character, to exhibit before the world the example of a consistent and devout follower of Jesus Christ.

And now, beloved, is there one here to-day who “would see Jesus?” But why *one* only? Would we not *all* rather see him, dearly beloved? Oh that every heart might now respond to my question, *I* would see Jesus, *I* would,—I must see Him! To all such I *should* answer,—to all such I *do* answer back again,—“We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” Amen.

MEDITATIONS.

III.

THE GREAT PASSOVER.

MATTHEW XXVI, 3—5, 14—30.

Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dipperh his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup,

and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Compare Mark xiv. 1, 2; 10—26; Luke xvii, 1—30; John 13.

You are aware, I have omitted large portions of scripture between our last text and the one of to-day, because they contained chiefly parables, &c. I shall endeavor to present to you a connected view of the scene now before us, which I think will of itself occupy all the time which can be allotted to this part of our worship. Being thus obliged to sacrifice that part of the sermon which is usually occupied by practical remarks, may it be given to each one of us, as we go along, to receive such impressions, and to gather such profit and enjoyment, as will meet our several spiritual necessities, and render this a blessed and comfortable season to our souls.

We commenced with the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem. This was the history of Whitsunday. The purification of the temple and the history of the barren fig-tree, together with a few parables and a number of occurrences, such as the healing of the sick, the hosannas of the children in the temple, the questions of the Herodians concerning the tribute of Cæsar, the controversy of the pharisees about our Lord's authority in matters of worship and temple regulations, and the one of the sadducees respecting the resurrection of the dead, etc, all of which we passed by because the historical elements in them are not prominent enough to enter into our plan; these and like details, we observe, form the history of Monday and Tuesday. Wednesday

came, and Christ, according to his custom, visited again the temple, passing from Bethany, his secret abode, over the mount of Olives, and through the valley of the brook of Cedron to the holy city. Wednesday was a memorable day. He finds, as usual, the pharisees and scribes crowding the temple gates. Already the eternal condemnation of most of them, if not of all, had been sealed, and their hearts and minds left by the Holy Ghost to the unrestrained influences of the powers of darkness. Hence the fearful progress of their rage and revenge against God and his anointed, and the acceleration of their doom. Forbearance was at an end. Christ, the searcher of hearts, well discerned their case, and with unexampled severity bursts forth upon these reprobated men in that awful discourse which you find in the 23d chapter of Matthew. In this heart-searching, overwhelming address, which rolls along like liquid fire, and which in point of power and unmingled terror has not its equal, he lays open their most secret crimes, announces to them and their guilty nation the woes and miseries which had now become in the records of Heaven their irrevocable and melancholy doom, and gives them thus a foretaste of judgment to come. This sermon closes his *public ministry*; it is the last he ever delivered. He began his ministry by speaking as never man spake: he closed it by speaking as man never will, never may speak again.

He passes out from the temple, none daring to put his hand upon him. His disciples follow him in consternation of mind. His voice, ringing down through the high porches of the temple,—“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them

which are sent unto thee, etc.”—“Behold your house shall be left unto you desolate!—this terrible voice,—for it had never sounded so before,—kept ringing in their ears, and melting their hearts. This “house,” this great temple,—is it really to be destroyed? Impossible! Insupportable thought! ah, they cannot bear, they cannot believe it. Christ, whom their thoughts and feelings could not escape, as he passes through the court, turns towards them, and, as they gather about him, and endeavor to lead his mind to a consideration of the vastness and magnificence of the temple edifice, if, peradventure, that might move him to recall the sentence of destruction which he had just pronounced upon it, he repeats and confirms it still, and with that asseveration which cut off every ray of hope, (Matth. xxiv, : 1, 2.) “Verily (*αμην*) I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.”

The minds of the disciples must necessarily have been deeply impressed with this absorbing subject. Now they could no longer doubt, but that city and temple would one day experience an utter desolation. There was, however, no opportunity in the crowded temple courts to propose to their master any questions on the subject; and they follow him in silence, as he passes along, through the streets, down the valley, and over the bridge of the Cedron, towards Bethany. This was his last return to that retired, humble spot, which had been, perhaps, his most endearing earthly home, and where alone, in all the region of Jerusalem, he had found true and faithful hearts and a safe retreat from the cunning wiles of wicked men. As he mounted the west-

ern ascent of mount Olivet he sat down once more to look back upon the city of David and the temple of Jehovah, and the land of prophets and patriarchs. Their glory was now departed; and church and state and land lay prostrate, like the lifeless corpse of a giant, to moulder away in quick and eternal dissolution.

The disciples now seized the favorable opportunity to propose their questions on the subject of Jerusalem's destruction, upon which they seem to have agreed by the way. Probably owing to the literal construction of Is. ii, and Micah iv, or some other similar passage, they had cherished the pleasing hope, that city and temple would stand at least until the judgment day, and the end of the present dispensation of nature. The coming of Christ to judgment and the close of his dispensation were thus naturally and necessarily identified in their minds with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. And as they had reason to believe that these great events would be preceded by some special external signs, they draw near to Christ and propose to him the following threefold question: "Tell us, when shall these things be," i. e. when shall city and temple be overthrown; — when shall be "thy coming and the end of the world; — and what shall be the sign of all this? Matt. xxiv, 3. To this threefold question, Christ answers in the 24th and 25th chapters of St. Matthew, by giving them a joint picture of both events, and their respective signs, leaving it to the different periods of fulfillment to separate and explain the different and mingled parts of the grand sketch. How well their seemingly confused representation, which has to this very day eluded the scrutiny of unpractical

speculation ; how well it was calculated for *practical* purposes, the history of Jerusalem's destruction itself shows, by informing us how a few hints contained in the 24th chapter of Matthew proved the salvation of the whole Christian church at Jerusalem. About an hour ago, Christ had closed his office as a *preacher* of the kingdom of Heaven : now he closes his *prophetic office*, and then proceeds to Bethany to refresh his heart once more with his pious friends there, and to take his last night's rest upon earth. Those who pretend that Christ was during this week invited to two suppers at Bethany, and that he was twice anointed, etc., assign this evening to the supper in Simon's house. But it is easy to see how inconvenient for such a purpose this evening would have been to Simon, when the festival was at hand, how likely he would have been to defer his invitation till at least easter day's evening ; and especially, how little disposed Christ would have been to spend his last evening at Bethany *in public*. They moreover split up the discourses of Christ, contained in the chapter 14 — 17 of St. John, assigning the 14th chapter to this evening, and the rest to the evening of the Passover at Jerusalem — a separation which is intolerably hard and forced. I am satisfied Christ spent the remainder of Wednesday at home in Lazarus' house ; and if the apostles had been permitted to write down what they pleased, we should really have reason to complain of them, that they, and especially John, did not preserve the conversation of this interesting season.

Proceeding to the history of Thursday, we shall endeavor to harmonize the four evangelists in reference to its various events.

First, let us briefly consider the plain, connected history of the exit of Israel from Egypt and of the institution of the Passover and the festival of unleavened bread. This is not only the best, but the only key to the language of the evangelists on the subject of our meditation, and it will make plain and easy what has occasioned such dreadful confusion and dispute among the very best commentators on our present text.

The time of Israel's deliverance drew near. One miracle more — dreadful in its nature — and Pharaoh and Egypt were to be prostrated with awe and fear, and the bands of God's people broken. In the night belonging to the fourteenth day of the month called Nisan, and which forever remained the first month of the year among the Israelites, Jehovah was to pass through the land of Egypt, to smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt both man and beast. (Comp. Ex. xii, vs. 1, 2 and 6.) This night, according to Jewish reckoning, beginning the day at sunset, was of course the night between the thirteenth and fourteenth day of the month. From the tenth day of this month to the close of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth day, a lamb was to be kept by every Jewish family large enough to consume it at once; and between the evenings (i. e. between 3 and 6 o'clock) preceding the beginning of the fourteenth day, the lamb was to be killed, the door-posts touched with its blood, and the lamb itself roasted with fire and eaten that very night. That the time when the lambs were killed was between the thirteenth and fourteenth day, and not between the fourteenth and fifteenth, is plainer than noonday, from the facts — first, that the passover was to be held on the

fourteenth day, in the night belonging to it, while Jehovah passed through Egypt with the last plague, i. e. the slaughter of the first born; and second, that in thus passing through the land, the Lord expected to find the blood of the lambs on the door-posts of every Jewish family. Driven out by the Egyptians, in consequence of the dire calamity which had befallen the latter, Israel was necessitated to leave Egypt during the *day-time* of the fourteenth day of Nisan, and to take along with them the unleavened dough in their kneading troughs, which they subsequently baked and ate unleavened, during the evening season, i. e. about the beginning of the fifteenth day of Nisan, just as soon as sufficient of a halt could be made by the caravan to afford an opportunity for baking and eating. All this gave rise to the double divine institution of the celebration of the Passover, or the eating of the Paschal lamb in the night belonging to the fourteenth day of Nisan, and to the subsequent period of the unleavened bread on the fifteenth day of the same month and the six days following that. From Ex. xii. 18, it might indeed appear as though the fourteenth day was the proper first day of unleavened bread. But a comparison of Levit. xxiii, 5, shows plainly that the language in this verse is not logically definite, the subject being too plain to require this, and that the "even" there, is the even from three to six o'clock in the afternoon of the fourteenth day itself, and not of the thirteenth day, as in vs. 6. For there (Levit. xxiii, 5, &c.) we are told expressly, that the fourteenth day of Nisan is the Passover day, and the fifteenth the day of the festival of unleavened bread; and that, besides, on this latter day as well as on the seventh day from it, no

servile work was to be done. On the five intermediate days, as well as on the proper Paschal day, such work could therefore obviously be done. The fifteenth day being thus considered a kind of Sabbath, a *paraskere*, or "preparation," was connected with it, which occupied the hours from three to six o'clock, afternoon of the fourteenth, or the proper Passover-day. From the close connection of these two solemnities, i. e. the Passover and the festival of unleavened bread, and the remainder of the circumstance mentioned, the following indefiniteness of expression was the natural result in common parlance. The term Passover is in the evangelists the general term for the entire celebrations from the Passover day to the seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread. Thus it is used in Luke ii. 41, — John ii, 13 and 23, and other places, in Luke xxii, 1; (comp. Exod. xiii, 18.) Again, the festival of the unleavened bread is called Passover by way of eminence, because it is the greater of the two days. Again, the fourteenth was called the "*paraskere*," because the preparation for the fifteenth day or the festival, fell into the last three hours of the fourteenth day.

"And it came to pass" (says Matthew xxvi, 1, 2) "when Jesus had delivered all these sayings," — i. e. all those contained in the chapters xxiv, xxv, — "he said unto his disciples, ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is or will be betrayed to be crucified." "The feast of the Passover" is here the festival of unleavened bread, commencing that year on Friday evening, and ending on Saturday evening. These words our Lord uttered, therefore, probably Wednesday evening. "Then,"

Matthew continues, “assembled together the chief priests and the scribes and the elders of the people unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him. But they said, not on the feast-day, (i. e. not during the *festival week* of unleavened bread) lest there be an uproar among the people.” To crucify him on the proper *first day of unleavened bread*, (i. e. the fifteenth of Nisan) would have been altogether against the law; nor would the law have permitted the people to make “an uproar.” For this decided step which the Sanhedrim took on Wednesday evening, our Lords’ last sermon was in their opinion the most abundant provocation. “Then one of the twelve,” Matthew again remarks, “called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,” etc., so that also falls into Wednesday evening; and it is not unlikely that when Christ departed from Jerusalem, the traitor lingered behind, under some pretext, to improve the irritated state of chief priests’ minds, in order to make a good bargain, in which, however, he was sadly disappointed by these crafty tradesmen.

“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread,” says Matthew, “the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? The expression of Matthew, “the first day of the feast of unleavened bread,” is explained by Mark to be “the *first day* of unleavened bread, *when they killed the passover*,” or the Paschal lamb; and Luke gives it the same appellation, with the addition of representing the killing of the Paschal lamb as *decidedly future*. It was therefore the thirteenth day

when the disciples proposed the preparation of the Passover. But how does Matthew call it "the first day of the feast of unleavened bread," a term belonging to the fifteenth and not to the thirteenth day of Nisan? The answer is simply this. According to the traditional law of the Jews, the leaven was to be purged away from the eve between the thirteenth and fourteenth day, to near the close of the latter. Nothing therefore could be more natural than, first, to begin the laborious task of searching the house for leaven (see Mishnah, Pesakim) in good season; second, to call in common parlance the the fourteenth day, the first day of unleavened bread, it being in reality the *first day* when all leaven was put away; and third, when engaged in the bustle of cleaning and making preparations against this fourteenth day, to say that the first day of unleavened bread was come, although in reality the thirteenth day may not have been closed yet. This is the familiar way in which the three first evangelists speak of the occasion, and Matthew in particular so, who besides uses the term "feast" in that general sense which includes the whole of the festivities during the eight days from the Passover to the close of the week of unleavened bread. Hence, if St. John (xiii, 1) represents the last supper to have taken place "before the feast of the Passover," he perfectly agrees with the other evangelists in sense, but writing, as he did, for the Greeks, he forsook the Jewish language of common intercourse on the subject, and stated accurately that the feast of the Passover season, i. e. the feast of unleavened bread (on the fifteenth day) had not yet arrived, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, etc. To clear away

the darkness from two or three passages more:— When it is stated, (John xiii, 27—29) that our Lord said to Judas “that thou doest, do quickly,” and that the disciples, not understanding the import of this remark, thought it had reference to some purchases yet to be made, or to almsgiving, we need not at all be surprised, as so many not uninformed men seem to have been. The whole fourteenth day, which had just began, was devoted to preparations, purchases, etc. against the fifteenth day—this being the first one in which no servile work was to be done. Again: when we shall see the Sanhedrim assemble in the night, and in the morning after the Paschal lamb had been already killed and eaten; when we shall accompany them to Pilate, to Herod, and to Golgotha, and see them employed in a matter very different from what the *proper festival* or any Sabbath would have permitted them to handle; we must again remember that the fourteenth of Nisan was a proper season, in the letter of the law, for all this, and that until the evening *closing* that day imposed upon them the duty of rest; (comp. the close of Luke, and xxiii the parallel passages.) Again, when this same day is called the “preparation,” (Mark xv. 12, Luke xxiii. 54, John xix. 42) this preparation has reference to “the Sabbath” which “drew on” and the proper festival of unleavened bread, which this year was connected with it and enhanced its sanctity. Matthew. xxvii. 62, we read: “Now *the next day*, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and pharisees came together unto Pilate “to beg for a guard to keep the sepulchre.” This “*next day*” was Friday evening—the proper festival (the fifteenth

Nisan) and the Sabbath having already commenced. To exculpate the Sanhedrim for this breach of the Sabbath is none of my duties. Finally, when we are told (John xviii. 28) that the Jews themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the *Passover*, we readily remove this so called unmovable difficulty by calling to mind that the word "Passover" designates in a general sense all the festivities of the season of unleavened bread; and that therefore the plain meaning here is, that the Jews kept out of the judgment hall not to become unclean against the *feast* (the fifteenth Nisan) which was now fast drawing nigh. Thus these and all other difficulties relative to this complicated subject may be disposed of to the perfect satisfaction of every candid man.

The chronological result of all this is, that the disciples approached our Lord on the thirteenth of Nisan, and made the preparation for the celebration of the Paschal season the same day; that the evening following, at the commencement of the fourteenth of Nisan, (Thursday evening) they partook of their meal, together with all other Jews, according to the law; and that all the difficulties raised against this view are founded upon the ignorance or the mistakes of those who made them. The time of our text being thus settled, the time and order of the subsequent events are clear of themselves.

The question of the disciples, where the Passover was to be prepared, was probably asked in good season during the forenoon, in order to give some time to the landlord who was to prepare the repast. The

reply of Christ was more particularly directed to Peter and John, as Luke informs us; and the whole of the charge given to them, and variously related by the evangelists, would be as follows: "Go into the city, and when ye shall have entered it, there shall a man meet you bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in, and say unto the good man of the house: The master saith, My time is at hand: I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples; where is the chamber where I shall keep it? and he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready."

The opinion that Christ had beforehand spoken to the man in whose house he intended to keep the Passover, and that on that account he could so exactly foretell that a servant with a pitcher of water would await the disciples when they should enter the city, and that an upper room furnished would be shown to them, though it is held by neither few nor insignificant men, I deem so utterly and glaringly inconsistent with the dignity of Christ and the solemnity of his situation at this period, that I shall content myself with having barely noticed it. I deem the indication of these circumstances to be one exhibition more of that knowledge of Christ which he possessed as a property belonging to his divine nature, omniscience, which he does not indeed seem to have exercised at all times, but rather denied; but which was always at his command, and used by him on every proper occasion. The familiar and indefinite language which Christ puts into the mouth of John and Peter, seems to imply that the landlord was acquainted with Christ, and perhaps a secret believer in him.

There is no reason to suppose that our Lord left at all his peaceful retreat during Thursday, until it was time to go to the place where his last repast was prepared. If Judas did not start to call upon the Jews in Jerusalem until Thursday morning, which I think is most likely, then Christ was probably all the day alone with his dear disciples, and with Lazarus and Martha and Mary, and perhaps one or two pious friends more. And it is delightful and soul-refreshing to think that at least one drop of heavenly comfort was mingled with the bitter cup of his approaching sufferings. In what holy conversation, mingled here and there with a psalm and with fervent prayer, the day was spent; what artless tokens of pious affection and tender regard were given and received; how the bond of perfectness must have bound faster and tighter heart to heart, and the fire of love and godliness in each believer gathered strength, brightness, and warmth, from mingling with all the rest close around the fountain-head of life and light,—it is easier to conceive than to describe. Oh! if Christians could do away the idle talk out of their mouth, and remember that their whole life is but one continued parting scene; that they are all the time parting with men and things, with duties and enjoyments, with youth and health and strength, with hours, days, and years, to see them no more till the day of account and of retribution: — Oh! what solemnity, what sacred awe, what holy caution, what heavenly wisdom, would overflow and sanctify all their words, and looks, and deeds. How would the laughter of folly die, and the idle tale grow insipid, and worldly schemes fade, and the dread of eternity take

wings and fly away, and the unction from the Holy one descend, and the peace of God and the foretaste of Heaven fill their hearts and their dwellings. Ah, our guilt is our immeasurable loss ! Oh ! that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night over my years wasted and lost, over more than half a life spent but too much like the silly and useless tale of a fool ! May the Lord have mercy, and forgive and heal me and all his people from that abominable thoughtlessness, which so much spoils our conversation and so deeply wounds the heart and the cause of our Lord.

The time to depart draws near, and our Lord makes ready with his disciples. None but himself knew that this was to be his last farewell from Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, from his seat at their table, from the bowers or closet of his retirement for meditation and secret prayer, from the corner where his humble couch used to be spread out at night. He had long before left and denied greater things than these for us ; but a tender heart never gets used to parting or hardened against the melting sorrows of separation from those we love. A tear may well have started in his eye, as he blessed them, and, thanking them for their love and all their kind services, commended them to his father in Heaven, as the rewarder of every work of faith and love. And many an aspiration may have gone up to Heaven in their behalf as they passed along the solitary way to the city.

In due season he arrived at the appointed place ; the table is spread ; the Paschal lamb, the other refreshments, (John xiii, 1) and the cup of blessing, are

served up, and Jesus, knowing "that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, he loved them unto the end," having loved his own which were in the world, (Luke xxii. 15, 16.) "And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer : for I say unto you I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Thus the most solemn of all subjects was almost introduced, and our Lord ready to proceed in remarks which would have opened another world to them, when, even at *this* time, his never-failing charity and forbearance were put to the trial by a most unhappy interruption, (vs. 24) "and there was also a strife among them," says Luke, "which of them should be accounted the greatest."

They had repeatedly been reprov'd for their undue aspiration after greatness. But ah ! pride sits deep in the human breast. However, let us be as charitable as we can, being encompassed ourselves with like infirmities. Indeed, I do not think that the idea of the disciples respecting the kingdom of Christ were quite as gross and secular as some suppose them to have been : and aspiring to eminence in *that* kingdom which they supposed Christ would rear, may very probably have been something very different from the coarse ambition of wholly worldly-minded men. Moreover, to be great in the kingdom of Christ, would bring a man into nearer relation to, and intercourse with, Christ himself ; and then, in this instance, the "strife" was perhaps occasioned by the questions, who should already now sit nearest to Christ, who on his right, who on his left, and who opposite this. How much

such considerations affect and alter the nature of the case it is easy to see, and we would almost forgive them, if they had striven quite earnestly. Had we ourselves been there, I do not know what we should have done; and in a certain sense we all aspire and ought to aspire to as high a place in the kingdom of Christ as we may. But the apostles ought to have remembered, and so ought we, that in the kingdom of Christ laws and principles govern which are diametrically opposite to the maxims of the world. There a man becomes great by becoming small; the greatest saint there is the most helpless sinner; all reign by serving, and every one is the least; and hence, true and thorough self-humiliation is the only wing which will bear a sinner up to the right hand of the King of kings. In Heaven competition works the contrary way, (i. e. downward) and the strife of self-denying, self-forgetting love is the only one known among the true children of light in either world, that above and that here below. The disciples were still both wrong and unwise, therefore, to strive for PREEMINENCE, though their strife may not have been altogether a carnal one; and they needed to be reproved and corrected; and Christ, in his untiring forbearance, proceeds to the correction without delay. And the *manner* in which he corrects their fault, is perfumed with the very frankincense of Heaven, and an eternal monument of divine love.

“And the supper having commenced (*του δειπνου γενομένου*, for so I must translate, and not like our English version, which renders it “the supper been ended”) the devil having already (not *now*) put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him;

Jesus, “when he noticed the contention of the disciples, although he knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God,” — although he was conscious of his supreme dignity and his divine nature, — “he riseth from supper, and laid aside his (upper) garments and took a towel and girded himself; after that, he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.” He acted the part of a *servant*, and that of the *lowest servant* that was at all permitted to enter the apartment. How soon the strife for preeminence must have ceased, you may imagine ! “Then cometh he to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost *thou* wash *my* feet ? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shall know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shall never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me,” — playing as I suppose upon the words, as though he was saying, You need not refuse this service from me, for you must after all receive it in a still higher sense, if you want to belong to my true disciples. “Simon Peter,” in the ardor of his feeling ever flying from extreme to extreme, “saith unto him: Lord, not my *feet* only, but also my *hands* and my *head* ;” — another specimen of honest but ill-directed effort to become eminent in the family of Christ *by aspiration*, he wanted to be more washed than the rest. But Christ, tempering his untimely zeal, and returning to the literal sense of language, replies — “He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, then he is clean every whit ;”

i. e. he that has washed his hands, and perhaps his face too, on entering the guest chamber (and you have done so) needeth not to wash these again ; but, if he wishes to be particularly clean and comfortable at the repast, he may get his feet washed, and then he is sufficiently clean for the occasion, be it ever so splendid or solemn. Then, again returning to the spiritual meaning of his terms, he says, hinting at Judas' case, "Ye are clean, but not all." Then he puts on his dress again and returned to his seat at the table, which shows once more that the supper was *not finished* but *begun merely*. The application of this example of humility, which Christ made after having resumed his place, you all well know. I do not therefore rehearse it. This application was made to the case in hand ; but it was recorded also for the purpose of universal imitation throughout the church. But it is a hard lesson. How many a pope, patriarch, cardinal, bishop, and priest — how many a lord bishop, how many a doctor of divinity, how many a preacher of the Gospel, how many a missionary, how many thousands of professed disciples, do you think, will be found at the judgment day who never learned or practised a syllable of it ! How many who knew it, and admired it, and talked of it, and wrote about it, in prose and rhyme, and wept over its inimitable beauties — but never followed it ; how many of such, I say, will be there ! How many a poor beggar will be there ; how many a poor ignorant old woman ; how many a child, unable perhaps to read, or to express a thought correctly, but who had this most precious lesson in their hearts, and showed it in their lives.

“ With them numbered may we be,
Here and in eternity ! ”

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified and said (John xiii, 21, 22), Verily, verily, one of you shall betray me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake : (Matt. xxvi, 22.) “ And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I ? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.” Here Christ does not intend to designate the very person who should betray him ; for it was in every disciple’s power to withhold his hand from dipping with Christ into any dish, and thus to escape the charge of treason.

It may be the landlord and his family joined with Christ and his company in partaking of the Paschal lamb ; for the lamb was to be wholly consumed — and thirteen men, who expect to partake of a supper afterwards, would not think of consuming a whole lamb. Or, at all events, the landlord and some of his male servants, all of whom probably knew Christ and were known by him, must have been about the table when Christ began to speak of the treason of Judas. What was more natural, especially if they were disciples in the common sense, than that *they* too should have asked, Lord is it I ? And indeed, such a suspicion would much rather have fallen upon the master of the house, or his people, than upon the nearer disciples of Christ. The object of Christ in giving the above general reply, seems then to have been to clear the family from that suspicion, and to limit it to the twelve disciples ; as also the evangelist Mark (ch. xiv, 20) paraphrases it :

“and he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish.” *To dip with one into the dish* is a mere proverbial phrase to express the relation of family or table companionship. This is confirmed by the evangelist Luke, (ch. xxii, 21) who expresses the same idea thus : “But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.” But Simon Peter, forward and impatient as ever, and also doubtless anxious for himself, was not to be put off with so indefinite an answer, which indeed so far as it went did only increase his apprehensions. He therefore beckons John, (who was leaning on Jesus’ bosom, i. e. reclining next to, and in front of, Christ) to ask, who the man was, of whom he spake. John asks, “Lord, who is it ?” (John xiii. 26) and receives privately the definite answer : “He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it; and when he had dipped the sop he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.” This sign was, however, intelligible only to John, and did not make manifest the traitor yet. Christ, presiding at the table, was then probably distributing portions among his disciples, and being about to give Judas his share, he thus made him known privately to John. Now at length comes the question of Judas himself, who seems, for very good reasons, to have been *the last* to ask it, and who did it probably merely to avoid suspicion. For had he asked it before, there would have been no need of the question of Peter and John. (Matt. xxvi. 25.) Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said : Master, is it I ? He said unto him : Thou hast said;” (i. e. thou art the one.) (John xiii. 27.) “And after the sop,

Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him : That thou doest do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor. He then, having received the sop, went immediately out, and it was night."

"And it was night;" a night black and gloomy as the deeds it was to bring forth. It seems as though the night of hell had been poured around Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to shroud the brightness of the full moon, and to hide him with his infernal designs and works. But oh! what must have been the spiritual darkness which filled his heart while he was groping along through the narrow streets to work out his own ruin and damnation, and forever to sell his Saviour, his soul, and his Heaven for a pocketful of dust ! There he goes, away from Christ and over to Lucifer and Beelzebub, whose son he was; fleeing from the first communion-table ever spread on earth, to the reprobated enemies of God and of his anointed,—away from Heaven down to the lowest hell. But let him go; he is undone; and not to be reclaimed. Jesus' voice and love prevailed not over him, and what in Heaven or on earth will? Let us return to the upper chamber; there is no night: there is no darkness, but light and glory. (vs. 31,) "Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you.

Ye shall see me; and, as I said to the Jews, (so might I also say to you, though in a different and better sense) whither I go you cannot come. A new commandment give I unto you, that ye should love one another as I have loved you; that ye also love one another." That is, hitherto you have endeavored to love your neighbour as yourselves, and when you did so much, you deemed yourselves as having done all, and indeed you had done all which was required by the law. But now comes that *new commandment*, of which the law knows nothing. Hitherto lawful self-love was the standard of your love to your brethren, but henceforth you will receive a new spirit and a new commandment, to love one another *as I have loved you*; *my love to you will now be the standard of your love to each other*; and while none of you will expect any brother to lay down his life for him, each will be ready to lay down his life for all, and for any who knows and loves me. Then follows the bold pledge of Peter, to lay down his life for Christ, and the prediction of his fall. In the mean time, the supper was ended, and the cup of blessing which belonged to the celebration of the Paschal feast was passed round. Then follows the institution of the Lord's Supper, and of the new Dispensation. This order of events is estimated by Luke, who speaks of two cups — of one before, the other after the bread; one is that belonging to the *Jewish Dispensation*, the *Old Testament*; the other is the cup of the *New Testament* in the blood of Christ, 'a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.'

During the celebration of the Lord's Supper, probably

the contents of the fourteenth chapter of St. John were delivered. The words, "arise, let us go hence," which we find at the close of that chapter, seem to indicate that by that time Christ begun to get ready to pass on to Gethsemane. The hymn of thanksgiving being sung, they arose from the table. Then, while the disciples were standing about him, still in the upper room, he continued his conversation as contained in John xv and xvi, and closed the solemnities of the evening by the prayer contained in the seventeenth chapter of the same evangelist. "And when they had sung an hymn," says Matthew and Mark, "they went out into the mount of Olives;" and he came out," says Luke, "and went as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him." "When Jesus had spoken these words," says John, "he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron where was a garden, into which he entered and his disciples."

Thus I have endeavored to sketch and arrange the events of Thursday, in the manner which appeared most consistent to my own mind, after a close comparison of the four evangelists, and after a consultation of the best means within my reach, which indeed are the best ones now existing. I have had occasion to dissent somewhat from either of my helps; but I have done so with reasons which seemed to me plainly to outweigh human authority. You are aware that according to the view which I have given, Judas the traitor went away *before* the Lord's Supper was celebrated, which is the most important point in which I have been obliged to depart from some of those of whose labors I have availed myself. I have had no personal interest to do so, but rather contrariwise.

I should now like to have as much time again for practical remarks as we have spent upon the development of our subject. But our time is more than expired ; and I feel that to tax your patience further would be more than what I am entitled to. Take, my friends, this meditation as it is, and not as it ought to be. Some critical remarks which crowded themselves irresistibly into it, have, I know, done much injury to its warmth, but they could not be omitted.

But what troubles me most is, that I have so much failed to set forth Christ in the fullness of his beauty and love, in which he appears through the whole scene through which we have passed. This could, however, not have been done without an analysis of all he uttered on the occasion, and this must needs have occupied days.

But let me not turn away now from our meditation without paying some feeble tribute of admiration to him, who loved his own that were in the world even to the end. He knew all which was before him. He knew that he had seen his last setting sun; he knew this was his *last night*; he knew that within two or three hours he would be prostrated in the dust under the weight of *our* guilt; and be in the far most disconsolate condition in which ever man was; he knew that within a few hours he should be dragged and hurried back by the very path and through the very gate by which he was about to go over to the mount of Olives; he knew that during the night he should be forsaken of all his disciples, be pulled and thrust through the streets of Jerusalem, calumniated, mocked, spit upon, whipped, and scourged; he knew that, ere the sun

should reach his meridian height, again he should pass through the opposite gate, to be nailed to the accursed tree; he knew that before another evening should come, he would lie in the cold grave; and still he seeks consolation from his friends, he makes no efforts to excuse their sympathies. Nay, he pities and comforts them, he prays with them and for them, that their faith might not cease; and he labors for their good to his last breath, until the “sorrows of death” and the “pains of hell” gat hold upon him, — no otherwise than if he was to prepare *them*, and not *himself*, for death. Still more: he provides for the comfort and consolation of his dear flock through all future times, and leaves them an inexhaustible legacy in the feast of his dying love, in the sure promise of that eternal Comforter whom he was to send; and in the unfailing prospect of his personal return to gather all his beloved unto himself, that they might be where he is, and forever behold and share his glory. Does not this picture bear the seal of Heaven? Will any one say it is earthly, and has sprung up in the heart of selfish man? Does it not *flow down* with the tender mercies of God?

May he who was comforting his friends and praying for his foes when they were in the strength of life and health, and he in the agonies of death — may he comfort us from the throne of his glory, and plead our cause upon the mercy-seat, when we are gasping in death, and our souls take their flight from this world to return no more. Amen.



MEDITATIONS.

IV.

CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE.

MATTHEW XXVI, 30—44.

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow [*twice*, — MARK] thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little farther, [about a stone's cast, — LUKE xxii, 41] and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy, [neither wist they what to answer him — MARK xiv, 40.] And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same

words. ——— LUKE xxii, 43—45. And there appeared an angel unto him from Heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly ; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow. ——— MARK xiv. 41, 42 And (he) saith unto them, (will you) Sleep on now, and take your rest(?); it is enough, the hour is come ; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up; let us go: lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

IN our last meditation on that general subject of which we have now so solemn a part before us, we left Christ and his eleven disciples on their way to Gethsemane, after the solemnities of the Passover and the institution of the Lord's Supper were finished. It was now necessarily late, and to return to Bethany across the mount of Olives would probably have been quite inexpedient, even if Christ had wished so to do. At the house where the solemnities were attended to, there seems to have been no room to spend the night, at which circumstance we shall not wonder, if we call to mind the multitude of strangers which were now gathered in the city in consequence of the feast. Gethsemane was a kind of garden at the foot of mount Olives, set with olive trees, as it would seem, and furnished with an oil-press, which gave the place its name. After passing that gate of the city which lies nearest to the temple and the bridge of Cedron, to which the road descended in the direction towards Bethany, Gethsemane was quite at hand, and only at the distance of a few steps to the left. Christ seems to have been acquainted with the family on the farm, and he probably was *in the habit* of spending his nights there, whenever it was too late to return to his pious friends at Bethany. For Luke says that “he went, *as he was*

went, to the mount of Olives;" and the evangelist John says that "Jesus *oftentimes* resorted thither with his disciples." It was, however, not a public or much frequented place; for John remarks, that Judas, which betrayed him, knew the place: which implies that it was not *generally* known to be one of the resting-places of our Lord, or even much noticed by people at large. It may have been a poor, pious family, or perhaps a single, plain, and godly keeper of the garden, that resided there; and poverty and piety have always been sufficient to withdraw men from the notice and regard of the world. Even at *this* season, when all tolerably furnished houses in and about Jerusalem must needs have been filled to overflowing, Gethsemane appears as a deserted and solitary spot.

It seems probable, too, that whenever Christ resorted to this place, he expected to spend his night *in the open air*, slumbering with his disciples, under the trees or on some seat or bench about the humble dwelling, as though this was a more eligible couch than could be expected in the house itself. For none of his disciples even *suggests* the idea of calling the inmates up, though this must have appeared to them desirable, as they could not possibly be ignorant of some approaching danger, after all the solemn preparations which their Lord had made for his separation from them. *Swords* they had provided *against* their Master's will; but to get into a safe dwelling in the garden does not occur to them: an evidence that there was none there. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head."

Neither the high priest, nor even his servants, nor any of the self-mortifying pharisees seem to have so much as known that place where Christ "*oftentimes*" took his night's rest on the ground, after a day of hard labor performed, and of still harder rebuke and wrong suffered. And thus it often afterwards happened, that the most precious and lovely of God's children lodged and worshipped in caves and forests, unvisited by and unknown to their persecuting enemies in high and sacred office, except when infernal fury goaded them on to explore those uneviable abodes, in order to draw out godly men and women and innocent children to torture and death. But now those suffering saints are in Heaven with Christ; and their infuriated enemies, that were mightier than they, are with Annas and Caiphas in hell. To this place he resorted now for the last time. Let us, my dear friends, accompany him. Our respective personal cases, our personal, eternal destinies, are eternally interwoven with its scene, a scene to which I can find no epithet — surely our hearts ought to be no strangers to it. Would I could lead you now into the very place, instead of endeavoring to recall its unparalleled events in unfit words and fleeting sounds. It would be better for us all, perhaps, to stand around the sacred place in silence, and see what never man saw and hear what never man heard, than to listen to the united harmony of Heaven, or to view at one glance from the mount of Patmos the golden streets and pearly gates of New Jerusalem.

But let us lose no time. We will attend to our subject as well as we can. May we be blessed to-day with a solemn and humble frame of mind; may we be enabled to put off our shoes, for the ground upon

which we stand, is holy ground: and may I be enabled to speak, not with the intelligence, power and eloquence of a superior spirit, (for this would render me no more fit to do justice to the subject, than I am now) but with the feelings of a poor, pardoned, believing sinner, who knows nothing but Christ and his cross.

I propose to divide the subject of our meditation into four parts :

I. Christ's agony in the garden.

II. His utter destitution of all human comfort and support.

III. His entire subjection to his Father's will.

IV. His heavenly consolations.

I. Many curious and not a few profane inquiries have been made with regard to the topic now before us. What was the cause of the anxiety and distress which Jesus manifested in the garden ? Was it mere apprehension of what he knew was about to burst upon him ? But if he knew his approaching sufferings, certainly he knew, too, " the glory which should follow ; " he was sure of victory. Could *he* who had, for thirty years and more, forgone the very glories of Heaven, and borne not the *usual*, but the most *unusual* inconveniences of this miserable world, could he experience such misgivings at that catastrophe which, though dreadful in the extreme, was the very one which was to work the peace of this world and open to him the high gates and the " everlasting doors " of his endless and universal reign ? True it may be said, stoicism had not destroyed his natural sensibilities ; fanaticism had not inflamed his imagination nor sundered the mysterious

ties nor destroyed the mutual sympathies of body and soul in him; quietism had not wrapt him away from the world of realities into that wide, lifeless, breathless desert of moral enchantment, where all natural and moral distinctions pretend to vanish: true, that madness, which men call bravery, was of all things the farthest from him; and all the selfish motives by which common wicked men are borne on in the closest encounter of perils, sufferings, and death, in every imaginable form, could be no support to him who was holy and harmless and separate from sinners: and we will even grant that he was either not permitted or did not choose to call forth the energies of his *divine nature*, to sustain him in his dreadful contest, but that he encountered it purely with the powers of his holy humanity. To this concession, indeed, we are driven by the fact that *an angel*, a *created being* was sent to comfort and *strengthen* him. And we will grant, too, that the Christian martyrs, who in after times showed so much courage, were in a very different and far better situation than he: they had a Saviour in Heaven, and a special Comforter sent into their hearts by their risen, ascended, and omnipotent Redeemer, while “the man Jesus Christ” in Gethsemane feels himself *solitary*. Nevertheless, if mere *bodily* sufferings at hand distressed him so much, where, we ask, is the unconquerable fortitude of this superior person? Where is the advantage of a calm and peaceful mind such as *he* possessed? Where are the consolations of a pure and holy conscience? where the comforts of untarnished piety? where the secret communications of the divine favor? and where the power of faith, and of prayer unremitt-

ted? Was their combined influence unable to support him at the approach of *transitory bodily* sufferings, though their *degree* be ever so great? Verily, there is something more here than the apprehension of bodily pain and death, be it what it may.

“Search the Scriptures,” saith the Lord; “they testify of me.”

Already in the Old Dispensation the laying on of the sinner’s hands upon the head of the sacrifice which was to be offered in his place, and the laying on of Israel’s sins upon the scape-goat, were evidently calculated to awaken and to cherish the impression of a *translation of sin*. The very words which the Scriptures use on those occasions express the idea, and *could* make no other impression upon a plain, untutored people who were unable to correct the blunders or the daring language of the Bible by the abstract principles of their moral philosophy, — as the wise men of our age are doing. Men find it very hard, I know, to *understand* how sin should be *transferred*. But whether it be any easier to *understand* how *sin being untransferred*, the sinner should *be treated* like a righteous man, because the righteous man was treated like a sinner on his account, — and that under a *perfect moral government* — I leave them to judge. But, after all, “why should it be thought a thing incredible with you” that *sin* should be transferred — with you who acknowledge with one consent that a single word uttered before the judge, or one stroke of the pen may make one man surety for another, and thus *transfer a peculiar debt* from one individual to another to all essential intents and purposes, — a debt which the other individual never incurred,

nor had any connection with whatever ? Whence all at once the impossibility of such a transfer, merely because the debt is a *moral* and not a *pecuniary* one ? If one debt may conceivably be transferred as well as another, is it not really *seeking* difficulties where there are none, to say that ‘ Jesus Christ the righteous ’ was merely *treated* by God like a sinner, *without* a transfer of our guilt to him, and not rather *on account of it, and after it* ? Who has ever heard of a man’s going to prison for the debts of another, without having previously recognized those debts as his own ? The whole scheme of sacrifices speaks of a transfer of sin, and an exchange of places before the bar of God, in favor of believing sinners, — and what the sacrifices *shadowed forth* becomes *reality* in Christ. Our sins are his — his righteousness is ours — if we believe. Taking *this view* of the subject, we shall find a difficult verse in Psalms lxix rendered plain. This Psalm is a Messiah prophesy. Christ has repeatedly quoted it, and applied it to himself. The fifth verse of it reads thus : “ O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee; ” — a troublesome passage ! The word “ foolishness ” (אִילָּלָה) means, in the actual connection, *sins of ignorance*, at the mildest; and the word “ sins ” (אֲשָׁמוֹת) expresses positive transgressions, real guilt. To shift off this verse from Christ upon another subject, is impossible without doing violence to the sacred text ; while no figure of speech will soften these expressions so as to make them predicable of anything in the character or life of Christ. Christ had sins, then, which he called *his own*. And whose could they originally have been — since he was ever sinless — but *ours* ?

They were ours — now they are his; — of course they were transferred, like a debt, — and their payment now demanded from him, occasions him the anguish predicted in our Psalm, and fulfilled in our text. Of similar import, probably, is Ps. xl, 12. On 2 Cor. v. 21, we read, “for he (i. e. God) hath him (Christ) to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made *the righteousness* of God in him.” To take “sin” as meaning sin-offering, would be destroying the relation of the term “sin” to the opposite term “righteousness of God.” The import is strictly this. God made Christ a sinner for us, that we might become divinely righteous in him; just as the judge pronounces the surety to be the real debtor of the sum in question, while the real contractor of the debt is *really* released. What language can be stronger? what thought more comfortable to a believing sinner? To adduce but one passage more of this kind. Gal. iii, 13, it is said, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made *a curse for us* ;” everywhere an exchange of character and place at the bar of Heaven, and not merely of sentence, or fate. The language of Scripture is too powerful to admit of such a superficial view; and one which, in my estimation, is beset with many and *real* difficulties. Again, the apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews, v. 7, says that Christ, “in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him *that was able to save him from death, was heard*.” Whether this passage refers to Christ’s sufferings *in the garden exclusively*, or only by way of eminence, is immaterial to us now. According to it, he was heard by him that

was able to save him from death. Yet, from bodily death, he neither was saved, nor did he choose or ask to be. From what death, then, was he saved? Let the Psalmist reply:—“Thou hast delivered my soul from death.” Or if you want the most direct answer, here it is:—“The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation shall he greatly rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips, Selah. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.” According to these passages, was saved from the death of the soul the second death, the terrors of which must therefore have stood in threatening array about him during some period of his sufferings; and as that deliverance was the effect of his strong crying and supplication to God, what period, I ask, answers this description better than the awful hour of darkness and terror in Gethsemane? Nor is this a matter of mere speculation, or unhalloved, curious inquiry. Were this the case, I should never have touched upon it. No, it has its profound, practical interest. In Heb. iv, 15, the apostle gives us the consolation, and every Christian feels its preciousness, that we have an high priest at the right hand of God, who “was in all points tempted (exercised) like as we are, yet without sin,” i. e. without committing any sin. And the same apostle assures us—and every Christian feels its truth—that we needed such an high priest. But where is the one of all the “points,” where the period, what the condition, in which we need the experienced sympathies of our great high priest more than when our sins rush upon

us like destruction from the Almighty, and when our very souls are swallowed up, almost, by the terrors of the second death ! Oh, if he did not know how to sympathize with us then, he could not have been said to be tempted in all points, — no, not in the most essential point, — like as we are, and we should want another high priest besides him still.

What, then, was the agony of Christ in the garden ? We may now venture a reply, though the full view of the subject the Lord will doubtless give us himself, in the other world. First ; our Lord's agony in the garden included as much of that mental distress which the sins of our race would have brought upon their consciences, when awakened and tender, as divine justice required, as an equivalent payment from a personage so eminent as Christ was, an ordeal which rendered him at the same time infinitely more than equally experienced with the most tried and tempted of his followers upon earth. No infernal torments need to be included, since his divine character would outweigh worlds both in degree and duration, and since he never intended to sympathize with those in hell. That Satan also made his last and most desperate assault upon him, I unhesitatingly admit. What Christian is there, that has gone through the dreadful hour of conviction, and that does not know what a hailstorm of fiery darts of unbelief, despair and blasphemy Satan hurls into the distracted soul, and what desperate efforts he makes to seal her damnation at that eventful and decisive period ? And that he tried his utmost in his assaults upon Christ, who that knows him will ever doubt ? But secondly ; all this anguish was still heightened by the apprehension of

his approaching death, and by many aggravating circumstances connected with it. This is plain from his own words when he comes to his disciples the last time. "Will you sleep on now and take your rest? It is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up! Let us go! Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." Says the pious Henry, "He had a full and clear prospect of all the sufferings that were before him. He foresaw the treachery of Judas, the unkindness of Peter, the malice of the Jews and their base ingratitude. He knew that he should now in a few hours be scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross; Death, in its most dreadful appearances — death, in pomp, attended with all its terrors, — looked him in the face."

Thus far we have spoken of the nature of Christ's agony; before we dismiss this part of our subject, let us look for a few moments at its intensity. The evangelists evidently wrote in the clearest frame of mind, and are nothing but sober narrators of their facts, even in this and similar instances. Yet the terms they here use are of great emphasis, and the picture which they draw is full of gloom. Christ no sooner comes to the garden, than he takes his three more confidential disciples, separates himself from the rest, and begins to be sorrowful and very heavy (*ἠρξάτο λυπεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδυναμεῖν*); he became overwhelmed and distracted with distress. These two words in the original text, of which the latter is more emphatic than the former so as to make a climax, are joined for the sake of emphasis to express one thought together, for the expression of which either word alone would have been too weak.

This condition of our Lord the disciples first inferred from his appearance, but soon out of the abundance of his depressed heart his mouth spoke. Unable to bear it any longer alone, he said unto them, "My soul" — this word, and some other like ones, pass among our critics for a mere personal pronoun even to this day; while every instance that I can recall shows that they are employed for the sake of emphasis — "My soul," my very soul (as we should say) — "is exceeding sorrowful," (*περὶ λύπης*) surrounded with sorrow, "even unto death." Stronger expressions than these do not exist in language, and exaggeration is out of the question here. Then, seeing them weary and sleepy, he adds, "Tarry here," do not return to the others to sleep; watch with me! His strength was spent, and for the first time he felt the need of human sympathy. But soon finding even their company burdensome, he tears himself away from them, about a stone's cast, to pray alone. Then he assumes the attitude of deepest distress; he falls "on his face" and pours out his soul. Submission he finds in his heart while praying, but relief he finds none. Distressed he returns to his disciples, and "findeth them asleep." And he saith unto Peter "What!" you have made such professions of attachment to me; you wanted to die for me; "could you not watch with me one hour?" Alas! he pleads for one hour's sympathy and assistance from his weak and drowsy followers. O! how destitute must he have felt himself! He goes the second time to pray alone, and finds no relief; he returns the second time to his disciples, and finds no sympathy. Human relief fails; God remains his last hope. Tearing away once more, he prostrates himself again;

(comp. Luke xxii: 45. *καὶ ἀναστὰς κ. τ. λ.*) and now the most awful struggle for life begins. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and in the cool night season, while prostrated on the damp ground, the sweat of anguish breaks out over his whole body, and is, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. "And there appeared an angel unto him from Heaven, strengthening him." Such then was his frame of mind that no ordinary means did suffice to relieve him; an angel with an express message and peculiar assurances must be sent. High and distinguished honor indeed, to be the bearer of this errand,—an errand before unheard of in Heaven! But can you think of anything more fit to impress us with ideas of the most awful, I had almost said unnatural distress, than the need of a messenger from Heaven to comfort and strengthen Jesus, the Son of God, lest his distress should crush him?—But we must hasten to our second topic.

II. I have already and necessarily anticipated so much of the three remaining topics of our meditation, that I may hope to study more brevity in remarking upon them, than I have been able to do thus far.

There is doubtless something very strange in the conduct of the disciples on this occasion. Eleven pious and tender-hearted, active, self-denying men profoundly asleep, while their beloved master, for whom they were willing to lay down their lives, is distracted with sorrow and writhing under the agonies of death! For aught that appears, there is no plea to be urged in their behalf. They had not been obliged to

watch the previous nights; they had not been fatigued during the week past; all the preceding day they were with Christ at Bethany, except those who ordered the Passover to be prepared. They had just gone through scenes which ought to have stirred at least all the natural powers and sensibilities of their minds. They had just celebrated the deliverance of Israel from bondage, a solemnity which kept many of the Jews up all night; their hearts must have been deeply affected with the humbling example which Christ gave them in washing their feet, while they were quarrelling for pre-eminence; deep anxiety had taken hold on them when they heard that one of them should betray Christ; they had just attended the institution of the Lord's Supper, had listened to his last affecting discourses, his last prayer, his repeated admonitions to watch; they had been repeatedly told that they would all flee and forsake their master this very night, and be offended because of him; Peter had heard that he would betray him three times before morning; they knew that this night some important and dismal prophecies should be fulfilled, and that Christ should be betrayed into the hands of sinners and be put to death; they knew that the traitor was gone already to his infernal work; and when they came to Gethsemane they saw their master's distress of mind, and Peter, John and James heard his pressing entreaty, — could ye not watch with me one hour! And is it possible, we are obliged to ask, that they could sleep? Was it naturally possible for them, under such circumstances, to shut their eyes, and to procure that calmness of mind so indispensable for a night's rest, especially in the open air and on

the hard ground? It is a fact that they did sleep, and that no combination of the most rousing and alarming circumstances could keep them awake.

No doubt, it was intended by a holy providence and was one of the burdens which Christ had to bear for us, that he suffered, destitute of all human consolation. It does seem as though the disciples had been providentially given up to the most stupefying influence of this body of clay, to disable them to afford relief to their master, when the unmingled cup of suffering was to be drunk to the bottom.

Jesus our Saviour, in this destitute and needy condition, is an object of the deepest interest and of liveliest gratitude to those who know the secret ways of God with his children. They know that every particular sacrifice and deprivation of Christ is like a sown seed, from which rich and waving harvests of spiritual consolation are continually springing up to the dear little flock of his pasture. Not a prayer, not a sigh, not a tear of his, but it procures for them some heavenly treat; and his fastings and deprivations, his watchfulness, weariness and exposures are richly decking their spiritual table, and draw the curtain of heavenly peace around the defenceless pillows of their rest. And when in the depth of anguish they feel the soothing influences of Christian tenderness and sympathy, and are upheld by the wrestling intercessions of their beloved in Christ Jesus, when they are carried safely through the trying hour of darkness and distress by the faithful prayers of their watchful friends, poured forth in their hearing at the throne of grace; — ah! then they remember with sweet and humble gratitude the

forsaken Jesus in the garden, and a connection between their spiritual riches and comforts and his destitution becomes clear all at once to their souls, of which they had no conception perhaps while in health of body and in the cheerful vigor of heart and mind. They rejoice then exceedingly with a joy full of glory, that ever he did procure such sweet comforts for their distressed souls, and they are prepared to give him everlasting thanks for every tear he dropped upon the accursed ground of this world. Yet they are careful, too, to learn the important lesson of him, not to lean ultimately upon any created arm. They learn of him, when lawful earthly consolations and sympathies fail, to go a little further, and, where no man can see them or overhear their prayer, to fall on their faces and with naked and unalloyed faith and trust in God, to lean upon his almighty arm alone, and to throw themselves with their burden down at his feet, there to live, or there to die.

III. We now come to our third topic, where Christ appears in the highest splendor of his glory, that is, in the free and entire surrender of his rightful personal claims and his lawful interests to a higher end ; a surrender made in voluntary and perfect obedience to his Father in Heaven, while himself was sinking into the deep gulf of unmitigated sufferings ; *unmitigated*, I say, because relief did not come until the close of his struggle. And here we have before us the most powerful and interesting illustration of the very essence of that moral law upon which the divine government rests. "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings

and sacrifices as in *obeying* the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices and eat flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning *burnt offerings or sacrifices*; but this commanded I them, saying, *Obey my voice*, and I will be your God and ye shall be my people.” Jer. vii. 21.

The most free and enlarged sacrifices of Christian love are the highest will and good pleasure of an infinitely benevolent God; and he who performs them most bountifully and conscientiously, acts in the most perfect *conformity* to the divine nature and obedience to his divine will. Still—singular as it may appear—those sacrifices cannot be commanded and exacted, since this would be destroying their very nature as free and spontaneous actions of a benevolent mind. O that we could throw away far from us that earthborn economy which asks, Is it my duty to make such or such sacrifices for the perishing souls of men? Alas! I wish it was your inclination to do it, and duty, cold duty, would take good care of itself. But if you must needs ask about duty, do not, I pray, bring forward the unhallowed stone and balance of human prudence, and the infidel “calculation of chances,” from your arithmetic. Take the balance of the sanctuary; come here to dark Gethsemane; kneel down near your Saviour on the ground; listen to his

prayers, his groans ; mark the workings of his torn breast ; witness the noblest of all conquests, the freest, greatest of all sacrifices ; drink in his spirit ; and then, then weigh your duty, and do it. But I know, before you have taken hold of the scales, his spirit has carried you away ; the sacrifice which has caused your anxious and unremitting inquiries concerning duty, is made, and has already become the source of high delight and profit to yourself. — “And he went a little farther, about a stone’s cast, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” “And he went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done !” “And he left them and went away again and prayed the third time, saying the same words.”

Shall I spoil and darken and tarnish the moral beauty of this quotation by explanatory and commendatory remarks, to make it intelligible to some of my hearers, whose spiritual sense may as yet be dead ? As well might the earth send up smoke and clouds to polish the sun and the moon and the stars, that the sightless eyeball might be blest with the glories of the firmament. No ! Let those comment upon such a passage, who never understood, who never felt its awful solemnity.

My brethren and sisters, who know by happy experience the realities of that glorious world to which you are travelling, you, who have a living impression of the nature of holiness, and of the spirit of Christ and its ways and workings in man, tell me, do you have

an ideal of perfection among your loftiest moral conceptions of whose heavenly birth you are most satisfied? do you have among your loftiest conceptions an ideal of holiness reaching beyond the one now before you? Such obedience exercised by such a personage, under such circumstances, with such immediate prospects, for such a purpose — can your imagination stretch beyond it? Do you not feel now like replying, “And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth?” Is it not the image of the invisible God? Ay! It is too holy to have originated anywhere but in Heaven. It flows down in streams with the tender mercies of God. Well! Christ hath left us an example that we should follow his footsteps. To him it was a hard task to obey, for he was left alone. To us it will be a delightful one through his gracious presence and help, provided we do not make delight and comfort the condition of our obedience and submission. “Obey my voice, saith Jehovah, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”

IV. When the anguish of the Saviour had reached the highest pitch sustainable by a human frame, then the heavens opened, and an angel descended to strengthen him. It might perhaps appear to some that not consolation, but merely supernatural strength to continue and sustain the contest, was sent. (Compare Luke xxii. 43, 44.) This may have been true. Still, after the last summons of Christ to his disciples, to awake and prepare for the enemy's approach when Judas and his band drew near, we find

Christ collected and calm in his mind, and clothed with a dignity so superior to human as to prostrate the rude hirelings of the high priest to the ground. Hence I infer that the strength sent to him from above, included comfort of mind, consciousness of his character, assurance of his ultimate success, and whatsoever was needed to prepare him for his last hours, so as to enable him in one holy and decisive encounter to foil the malicious combination of incarnate devils on earth, and the crowning effort of Satan's subtilty and strength, whose hour and power was now fast drawing near.

So the xxii and the lxix Psalms and the liii chapter of Isaiah, as they paint the sufferings of the Messiah, throw character and dignity around his sacred person and crown him with victory at last. No profane eye ought to have seen him in that disconsolate condition; and none did see him in it. Before the infernal band draws near, God has comforted his suffering child, and there he stands, with the meek and gentle majesty of a superior being, dressed in the formidable armor of holiness, with that calm greatness of heavenly love beaming from his eyes which remains the conquering queen of hearts, and forces veneration and worship from the wickedest wretch, even when herself under the heel of brute force. The black cloud, the roaring thunder, the lightning, and the rattling hail, the howling storm are past, and the blue heavens of the divine favor, and the shining countenance of his Father's love, smile again. And oh! what could he wish for more? what peril, what fate could he not meet under his heavenly Father's approving smiles?

Blessed be God, whose government beams with wisdom, justice and love. "The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord, and in thy salvation shall he greatly rejoice ! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah. He asked life of thee and thou givest it him, even length of days for ever more." But not only love to his dear, only begotten Son prompted him to send his messenger of consolation to Gethsemane,—love to a perishing world was another motive, and I may well say here, it was the grand one,—for which may eternal glory surround his blessed throne ! After all, my brethren, he knew his dear, holy child must expire under the burden of our sins. "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness" for sinners. His son Jesus must die, whether on the cold, damp ground of Gethsemane, or on the accursed tree on Golgotha;—after all, what difference, what choice was there between these two alternatives. And as for Jesus, if he was willing to become obedient even unto the death of the cross, surely he would have been willing also to become obedient unto a death upon the ground. But in that law, which will stand when Heaven and earth shall have passed away, it is written ; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," and against is written, "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ *must* die on the cross, on the accursed tree ; the antitype of the brazen serpent must be raised high to sprinkle kings and nations with his blood, and pour down healing and eternal life upon a guilty world. Amen, and amen, our

inmost souls reply. Go on, go on, thou Friend of dying sinners! Complete the blessed work begun, that our souls may live. God speed thee, O thou conqueror over death and hell! Break, by thy powerful and victorious cross, the strong bars of our eternal prison! Then ride forth and prosper, and our souls shall follow hard after thee; and while we have a breath to draw, if we are here below, we will profess and proclaim thy love and thy name before the world; if we are in Heaven above, we will sing songs of immortal gratitude and praise to thee, till eternity shall be no more. Amen.

the first of these was the establishment of a
new system of education for the poor
which was founded on the principles of
industry and frugality. The second was
the establishment of a new system of
agriculture which was founded on the
principles of economy and improvement.
The third was the establishment of a
new system of commerce which was
founded on the principles of justice and
moderation. The fourth was the
establishment of a new system of
government which was founded on the
principles of liberty and equality.

The fifth was the establishment of a
new system of religion which was
founded on the principles of piety and
morality.

The sixth was the establishment of a
new system of law which was founded
on the principles of justice and equity.

The seventh was the establishment of a
new system of medicine which was
founded on the principles of health and
longevity.

The eighth was the establishment of a
new system of music which was
founded on the principles of harmony and
beauty.

The ninth was the establishment of a
new system of painting which was
founded on the principles of truth and
nature.

The tenth was the establishment of a
new system of poetry which was
founded on the principles of imagination
and feeling.

The eleventh was the establishment of a
new system of philosophy which was
founded on the principles of reason and
truth.

The twelfth was the establishment of a
new system of science which was
founded on the principles of observation
and experiment.

The thirteenth was the establishment of a
new system of history which was
founded on the principles of truth and
accuracy.

The fourteenth was the establishment of a
new system of geography which was
founded on the principles of truth and
accuracy.

The fifteenth was the establishment of a
new system of astronomy which was
founded on the principles of truth and
accuracy.

The sixteenth was the establishment of a
new system of meteorology which was
founded on the principles of truth and
accuracy.

The seventeenth was the establishment of a
new system of zoology which was
founded on the principles of truth and
accuracy.

The eighteenth was the establishment of a
new system of botany which was
founded on the principles of truth and
accuracy.

MEDITATIONS.

V.

CAPTURE, ARRAIGNMENT, AND CONDEMNATION OF CHRIST.

MARK XIV. 43; XV. 1—23.

And immediately, while he yet awoke, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.

And straightway in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it. And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled. Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he

done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified. And the soldiers led him away into the hall called Pretorium; and they called together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees, worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

Compare Matthew xxvi, 47; xxvii, 1—31. Luke xxii, 47; xxiii, 1—25 John xviii, 3; xix, 1—16.

WE now come to the history of the capture, arraignment and condemnation of our Lord. The passages of holy writ which I have read, contain the account of that event as related in the evangelist St. Mark. The proper text for this discourse would again have been a harmony of the four Evangelists on the subject in hand; or you might have expected at least, that, as I have done heretofore, I should now also supply the deficiency of the evangelist from whom I have borrowed my text by the additional information with which the other three evangelists favor us, and then arrange the subject of our meditation under distinct heads, and proceed to my remarks. This, however, cannot be done in the present instance. This part of our Lord's history is so closely connected, that it seems to be incapable of any division which would not much rather deserve the name of laceration, while on the other hand it is of such a length and in various places seemingly so discrepant, that a harmony of the four evangelists and an exhibition of the event as it results from their joint testimony, must needs occupy near the length of a whole discourse, although the most rigid economy of time, and the greatest conciseness of

style be united to keep it within the narrowest possible bounds.

Yielding to these circumstances, I resolved at last to devote the whole of the present discourse to the plain exhibition of our story, permitting myself only such explanatory remarks as may serve to give it all the fullness to which our sources of information and the limits of a discourse permit us to attain; in which remarks, however, I shall the more willingly indulge, (and be indulged in by my hearers also, I hope) that we may have the more spiritual improvement as we go along. And if, at the close of this meditation, it shall appear to us that our suffering Lord, in his crown of thorns on his bleeding head, in his purple robe thrown over his lacerated breast and shoulders, is a subject on which our hearts would delight to dwell still farther; and if I can obtain some assurance that divine aid will be still vouchsafed to me in meditating upon this delightful theme, I shall, if I live and the Lord please, make *Him* the exclusive subject of our next meditation, and then dismiss the theme upon which we are now entering.

While Jesus made his last effort to rouse his disciples to watchfulness and prayer, Judas and his band entered the gate of the farm, and proceeded, as it seems, directly to the place where Christ and his disciples used to rest. The band consisted of a number of Roman soldiers ($\sigma\pi\tilde{\epsilon}\iota\tau\alpha\iota$) and a great multitude (Matthew xxvi, 47; Mark xiv.) of officers, or servants (John xviii. 3) from the high priests and the elders of the people. They had "lanterns and torches," (John,) which shows that the night was a dark one, (John xiii, 30.)

though the moon was now at the full. They were armed with "swords and staves," (Matthew and Mark) to be ready for a violent onset in case resistance should be offered. To prevent all mistakes, and to give more efficiency to the expedition, some of the chief priests (i. e. some who had been such in times past) and some of the captains of the temple (*σ α ι τ η γ ο ι τ ο ũ ι ε ρ ο ũ*) came with them. (Luke xxii, 52.) The Roman soldiery, however, were the proper executors in this case, and as they, of course, had no personal acquaintance with Christ, and probably never saw him before, it was necessary that the person to be apprehended should be pointed out to them on the spot; a caution which the darkness of the night rendered still more necessary. Judas, who marched at the head of the band, and who was the pilot of the whole enterprise, showed himself forward to do what indeed he was most fit for, and to mark to them their victim by a kiss, which was then the highest mark of friendship and pious affection, as various passages in Paul's writings clearly show. Against most critics I assume that the soldiers were Romans; not only because they evidently did not know Christ, while the servants or guard of the temple must have known him: but also, because they are called *σ π ē ι ρ α* band, (John xviii, 3) which always marks the Roman soldiery in the New Testament because (John xviii, 12) they have a *χι λ ι α ρ χ ο ς*, or captain over a thousand, also an expression never applied to the captains (*σ ι τ η γ ο ι*) of the temple; because, in the same verse, the band and its captain over a thousand are distinguished from the servants of the Jews (*ο ι δ π η ρ ε ί μ ι τ ũ ν Ι ε ρ ο ũ*); because (according to Luke xxii, 52) there were several cap-

tains of the temple on the spot, while only one captain over thousand (*Χιλιάρχος*) was present; again, because Christ, coming to his disciples the last time after he arose from prayer, says, "The son of man is (about to be) betrayed into the hands of sinners," (*αμαρτωλοί, ܡܝܬܪܝܢ*) or heathen; and finally, because the high priests evidently wished to do all they could to secure their victim, while the Roman governor would naturally assist them in the prosecution of persons designated by them as dangerous. Instances when the heads of religious sects prosecute their dissenting church members by means of a secular power, whose religious sentiments are equally against either party, are still so numerous in these countries, that we need not go very far to illustrate to a most surpassing degree of satisfaction the proceedings of the high priests and elders in the present instance.

Our Lord, knowing that his enemies are at hand, does not await their full approach; but leaving his disciples, meets at a small distance the band, who may have been looking this way and that way among the trees, lest, having perceived their approach, our Lord should make his escape. Calm and with becoming dignity, he asks them, Whom seek ye? Some of the Jews, probably not distinguishing him at the moment, answer, "Jesus of Nazareth," "Jesus saith unto them, *I am he.*" And Judas also which betrayed him stood with them; but he stands aghast, as it seems, not able to gather up courage that moment to fulfill his iniquitous engagements. As soon then as he had said unto them, *I am he*, they went backward and fell to the ground. John xviii.

There was certainly nothing terrifying in the word of our Lord. How then was the "great multitude," as Matthew calls them, all at once prostrated? After all the attempts to explain away the force of this passage, the only reasonable answer remains this; they were prostrated by the divine dignity of the Saviour's word and appearance, under whose tremendous weight, if unveiled, no created being would have been able to stand up. It was a ray of the inaccessible light of supreme power and majesty, which shot through these miserable worms of the dust. Christ speaking to the Jews, probably spoke Hebrew to them. The only words he could use in the present instance are "אני ה' I am he." But this expression had already acquired a deep and sacred meaning by the manner in which it is used several times in the Old Testament. A few examples will be in place here. Isaiah xli, 4, "I am Jehovah, the first and the last—I am he;" chap. xliii, 13, "Yea, before the day was," (or better, before there was any day) "I am he, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. I will work and who shall let it?" and chap. xlvi, 12, "Harken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." Pronounced with emphasis, then, the expression must have been in the highest degree awful and imposing to a Jew. And what makes me think that our Lord did utter it with emphasis, is that he had already done so on some former occasions. (John viii. 58.) "Jesus said unto them, (the Jews) Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him," well aware that this was saying more than a

mere man ought to say of himself. Had he been a mere man, it would have been blasphemy. And the same is probably also true in reference to verse 24. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Struck through with awe, high priests, servants, temple soldiers, and the band start back and fall to the ground. Nor did they rise again without his permission, which, however, he readily gave. For he now veils again the terrors of his glory, he asks them once more, but in tempered accents, whom seek ye? And when they make out to answer again as before, he rejoins, "I have told you, that I am he, (probably now omitting the emphasis); if therefore ye seek me, let these (pointing at his disciples) go their way." This containing a tacit permission to the band and the Jews to take him, they rise from the ground, probably some smiling, some angry, at their superstitious fears as they thought them to be, just as the ungodly worldling always does when the solemn time of divine visitation and rebuke is over. Judas, too, now gets over his fears, which at first seemed to check him, and true to his father the devil, even where it was no more necessary, (for Christ had made himself known) he lays hold of our Lord, and kissing him exclaims, "Hail, Master!" "Then they laid their hands on him and took him and bound him," as John adds. Some of the disciples ask Christ, whether they ought to offer resistance. Peter, without waiting for an answer, and to show some of his promised courage, cuts off the ear of the high priest's servant, which deed Christ disapproves, and healing instantly the servant, merely remarks to the high priests, the captains of the temple and the elders,

“Be ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves? (Luke xxii, 52.) When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness.” (Matthew xxvi, 56.) “But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all his disciples forsook him and fled;” probably scared by some, who attempted taking vengeance on them for the suggestion of resisting by force, and the deed of Peter. Christ being bound, and the disciples having escaped, the company returns without delay. Mark xiv, 51, “A young man,” probably belonging to the people on the farm, endeavors to follow Christ, but being violently seized by the band, leaves his garments in their hands, and flees. Peter and John (John xviii, 15) soon return from their flights, and follow the procession at a distance.

The first house at which they called was that of Annas. Annas had been high priest a short time ago, but was deposed by Valerius, and his son-in-law Caiaphas occupied the station now. The reason of their stopping at his house, was probably this. Annas was an old man, who did not wish to go to the council at so late an hour, unless he was sure that Christ was there; and as his house was probably so situated that the company had to pass by him, in proceeding to Caiaphas, he may have requested the leaders of the band to call in passing, that he might follow the procession to the house of his son-in-law, where the council was assembled.

The larger houses in Jerusalem used to form a square enclosing a yard of the same shape, in which

guests were often received, especially when numerous, and public business was transacted. Into this yard of Caiaphas' house the band entered, and it was there where the Sanhedrim had convened at this time; for, to go to the temple, where a large room was appropriated for such conventions, was probably considered improper at this hour.

John, who seems to have enjoyed the favor of the high priest, although he followed Christ, entered soon after and procured permission for Peter to enter likewise. That the high priest should have been so indulgent with John, may have been owing to his youth, or to relationship, or to the frequent gifts which the old, wealthy, and devoted Zebedee used to send from his net to the kitchen and table of his holiness, or to many other circumstances which we cannot now divine. Somewhat near to the door, the servants had kindled a fire, to warm themselves. To this fire Peter resorted, probably to hide himself among the crowd in order to escape public notice, while John seems to have been sitting or standing solitary at a small distance, that the noise and idle talk of the soldiers and servants might not hinder him from listening to the proceedings of the council. These proceedings were indeed absorbingly interesting in various respects, and we will ourselves turn our attention to them without delay.

The whole Sanhedrim and no small number of other individuals, all enemies of Christ, were present, and Christ stood before them bound, and ready for the trial. The regular method, according to the law of Moses and their own traditions, would have been to bring forward and examine the witnesses against him,

There was, however, a difficulty of no small consequence in the way of doing so. *They had no witnesses to examine, and no crime to charge him with,* and Caiaphas must have been at a loss indeed how to open the examination. Hence, to extricate himself if possible, and perhaps with a hope to catch something out of our Lord's own mouth (John xviii, 19) which might be turned against him, the high priest begins by asking Christ himself "of his disciples and of his doctrine." This was a proceeding in various respects objectionable. It was against all principles of equity and good sense, which never require a man to criminate himself; it was against the law of Moses, and against their own acknowledged tradition; and what is more than all this, it reflected upon the character of Christ, intimating that he might have secret machinations and plans to reveal and to confess: a miserable and iniquitous contrivance to cover the dishonorable fact, that they had not whereof to accuse him in any lawful way. The reflection contained in the address was the chief thing which drew forth the meekly defensive, but energetic answer of our Lord. To suffer wrong he was come, and he was willing so to suffer it and did so; but reflections upon his character, which was to become the foundation of all saving faith through all generations to come, he was not called to tolerate, he never did and never will tolerate them. Nor was it a hard matter to clear it. He had taught among them full three years publicly before them and all the people, and there were men enough present who had heard and disputed with him on all the great topics of biblical and Rabbinic learning, and controversy, and

doubt; they were both able and willing to testify against him, had they known what to say. Why did none of these sanctimonious zealots open his mouth and accuse him boldly now, when there was the most perfect security and a lawful opportunity to do so? A firm answer was absolutely called for here, and it was given. (John xviii, 20, 21.) "Jesus answered him, I spake openly before the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret I have said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them, which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said."

By this reply the mouth of the Sanhedrim is stopped; but an officious servant, violating both divine and human laws, smites Christ in his face in the presence of a civil and ecclesiastical board, adding to this rude insult the inconsistent charge of irreverence towards the high priest; which new reflection upon his character and conduct our Lord repels for the same reason, and with the same meekness and firmness as before. "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, (prove it;) but if well, why smitest thou me?" The artful contrivance to make our Lord criminate himself having failed, false testimony is resorted to. But in the council of the Most High it was decided that the character of his Son should remain even without the shadow of a blemish, and the synagogue of satan without the shadow of an excuse. To render the testimony of two witnesses valid, they must be separated, else their testimony is not a testimony, but a plot; though it is by no means certain that this was done in the present instance.

However this may be, God divided their tongues; their testimony was discordant, whilst its falsehood was, even aside from the disagreement of the witnesses, as clear as noonday. (Matthew xvi, 59, 60.) "Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none (that agreed.) At last came two false witnesses, and said, this fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." So Matthew; Mark, probably giving us the testimony of the other witness in question, makes the testimony run thus. (Mark xiv, 58.) "We have heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands, but neither so did their witnesses agree together," the evangelist adds. Now, had these charges been both harmonious and true, no sentence of death could lawfully have been passed upon Christ on their account; for they are mere charges of boasting, and are evidently allegorical; though as they were, they gave each other openly the lie, and were barefaced perversions of John ii, 19, where our Lord speaks of his own body under the metaphor of the temple. "Destroy this temple," he says to the Jews there, meaning his body, "and in three days I will raise it up." Nor did the infuriated Sanhedrim dare to build any verdict upon these accusations, and the high priest was brought again to the dire necessity of addressing another senseless and perfectly uncalled-for question to the innocent and defenceless victim of their rage. Rising up in the anguish of his soul in the midst of the

council, he asked Jesus, saying: "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?"—as though mighty accusations had been brought forward, and there was now occasion for refutation and vigorous defence. The answer which our Lord gave him, was indeed the most powerful one which the circumstances admitted of. (Matthew xxvi, 63.) "But Jesus held his peace." The import of this significant silence was plain, and it was confounding and mighty. What need is there (for this is the meaning of it) of my replying to these open, self-contradictory lies, which even you cannot and do not believe, nor dare to sentence me on their account: (Mark xiv, 61.) "But he held his peace and answered nothing." Now the Sanhedrim was in great straits. All the night had been spent in examining false witnesses to no purpose, and an evil fate seemed to confound and subvert every artful contrivance of the seventy wise men of Jerusalem, and of all their hirelings and satellites. Already the morning began to dawn; (compare Luke xxii, 66;) the unwelcome sun with hastening steps pressed hard upon them. The latest time to finish the hard task was at hand; and yet the detested, feared, hated young Rabbi stood still in the midst of them, alone, with his hands bound, defenceless, and meek, but firm, inculpable, unconvicted, unconquered, unconquerable; and their cause was more desperate than when they set out. There they were, sitting about, silent, with exhausted heads and blushing countenances, put to flight by the innocence of their defendant, and fairly at their wit's end. Then the high priest, cutting his way through

right and wrong to the blood and murder of that man against whom neither true nor false witness would avail, said unto Jesus, (Matthew xxvi, 63) "I adjure thee" (אֲשָׁרֵךְ) i. e. I cause thee to swear, "by the living God;" "tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" This form added to a proposed question, put the person to whom it was addressed under obligation to reply under the most solemn oath, if he answered at all. Christ did answer—and what? (Matthew xxvi, 64,) "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said," i. e. it is so, I am he. "Nevertheless," i. e. moreover, "I say unto you, hereafter," i. e. henceforward, "shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power," i. e. of God Almighty, "and coming in the clouds of Heaven" to judge and reign over this world, and to manage the affairs of the universe. The places of the Old Testament which Christ has in view here, and which give us the full import of his reply, you find in Psalms ex, and Daniel vii, 13, 14. The first reads thus; "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And the other, "I saw in the night visions; and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of Heaven and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and kingdom (not a kingdom, as our version says) that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Here some of the most unbelieving critics agree that the Messiah is spoken of, and his

divine nature asserted. And Christ applies the passages to himself under oath. I am overwhelmed at the thought ! Where is now the miserable accommodation system of unbelieving men, who tell us that Jesus conformed wisely to the superstitions of his age; and in order to gain a salutary and lawful influence among the Jews, pretended to be just that fabled Messiah, the vain expectation of whose coming occupied their vacant and sensual minds ? Where is it ? It is blown to ten thousand tatters by the force of this single passage. Christ has established his divine character upon the most solemn oath conceivable, and he is either a perjured blasphemer, or he sits now upon the throne of glory in Heaven, and will come to judge the world in righteousness, and reign from the rising to the setting sun for ever and ever; while their selfspun, selfwoven system will prove vanity and a lie and a spider's web in the dread day of eternal retribution. And you, all the enemies of his universal kingdom, or you, cold and thoughtless despisers of his dying love ! tremble at the greatness of his character and his power, and at the gloom and terror of your hastening doom. Either Christ is now in the lowest hell suffering the punishment of his false oath, or you must ere long go there, confounded by his sovereign and righteous sentence, and struck down by the thunderbolts of his omnipotence.

But some one might ask, Was it proper that Christ should establish his divine character *by an oath* ? The answer is, he had done so already before he came in the flesh. Is. xlv, 22, 23, — “I am God, and there is none else. *I have sworn by myself*; the word is gone

out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow."

But we must return to our story. On hearing the reply of our Lord, the high priest, taking the very thing in question for granted, and assuming against all propriety and good sense that Jesus was not the Messiah, pronounced him a blasphemer, and hiding his infernal joy under the mask of pious horror, rends his garment. Matt. xxvi, 65, etc. — "He hath spoken blasphemy," he exclaims; "what further need have we of witnesses?" (thus confessing that they had no witness in fact.) "Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think you? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands," (covering his countenance) "saying: Prophecy unto us then, Christ, who is he that smote thee?" In these abuses, the servants continued until the time was come to proceed to Pilate, while the Sanhedrim retired, to take farther counsel what to do next with him. His death was unanimously agreed upon. In the mean time Peter denies his Lord; but a reproving, forgiving look of his suffering Master restores the perishing soul to repentance and life. Want of time forbids us to attend in particular to this interesting subject. Of Judas Iscariot, too, we have only time to say that he was evidently present all the night. It was about this time that he approached the Sanhedrim, confessing his guilt and desiring them to take their money back. On receiving a spiteful answer from them, he is driven to despair, and instead of casting himself now at his Master's feet, runs by him, right to

the temple, where he throws down the reward of blood; and procuring a rope goes and hangs himself. The cord, being too feeble, breaks, and he is prostrated from some considerable height; his body bursts and his bowels gush out to the ground, while his poor soul goes "to her own place."

We now hasten to the judgment hall of Pilate, to which Christ, still bound, was hurried, as soon as the rising sun promised admittance at that criminal court. Careful not to defile themselves, the Jews refused to enter into the judgment hall, and the Roman governor was humane enough to come out to them to hear their cause. Conscious that they had nothing whereof to accuse Christ, they first endeavor to overawe the governor by the authority and dignity of their Sanhedrim; and when he asks them, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" they proudly reply, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them: Take ye him and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

According to the traditions of the Jews themselves, the power of capital punishment was removed from the Sanhedrim about forty years before the destruction of the temple, (i. e. about this time.) The reasons of this and the manner in which it was done, we are unable to ascertain. The probability is, that the growing influence of the Roman governor, and the declining and degenerating character of the Sanhedrim, rendered proper, and gradually introduced, such a change. About this time this law, by which the Sanhedrim was

deprived of the power of capital punishment, was a new thing and not yet carried quite into execution. This throws light upon the difficulties of our passage. The governor, not very anxious to settle the religious quarrels of the synagogue, was rather willing to leave it to them according to the *old* custom, unless they could show cause why the sentence of death should be passed; while the careful Jews were unwilling to take the responsibility upon themselves, and appeal to the *new* regulation. Indeed, that this was the state of things then, is implied in the remark which John adds to this part of the story. According to that remark, the cause was not transmitted to Pilate entirely in the common and regular course of business, but "that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled," (i. e. that he should be delivered into the hands of the heathen.) (Matt. xx, 19.) The governor having refused to condemn Christ *without a cause*, the Jews (Luke xxiii, 2) begin "to *accuse* him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king." What an open falsehood this was, is too plain to be proved. Had not Christ most positively *approved* of this giving tribute. How well Pilate knew his men, and how little he believed their statements, will appear from his own conduct. Indeed, if we think of the placid and meek countenance of our Lord, (for the countenance is the mirror of the mind unless consummate hypocrisy dwells within,) and of the impression which his whole appearance was calculated to make, what more powerful refutation of *such a charge* is there conceivable, than just his mere *presence*, his looks and the expression

of his eye. "When he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly." (Matthew xxvii, 12.) How much this part of Christ's conduct was calculated to show his innocence, and how far his disposition was from that of a rebel against the government, I need not tell you, nor did it escape the attention of Pilate. Upon this indictment, Pilate, far from believing it, takes Christ with him into the judgment hall, to examine him farther. "Art thou the king of the Jews?" he asks him. (John xviii, 33.) To which our Lord replies more largely than we should have expected. Showing that his silence on the outside was owing neither to stubbornness nor to insensibility; "Sayest thou this thing of thyself," is his answer, "or did others tell it thee of me?" (v. 34.) i. e. I appeal to thyself whether this question is prompted by thy own impression or conviction? do I look like an aspiring, daring outlaw and opposer of government? Is it not the clamor of the Jews which makes thee ask this question? To which Pilate replies, "Am I a Jew?" (v. 35.) I live in no expectation of a Jewish king. To be sure, "thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me; what hast thou done?" Thou must after all have committed some crime! To this, Christ answers again: to the former question, whether I am a king, I reply, I am a king. Yet not a temporal one. My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should

not be delivered to the Jews. (v. 36.) My very condition shows the nature of my kingdom. Pilate perfectly understood the meaning of Christ by an easy reference to some popular maxims of the stoics, and taking him for an innoxious but eccentric personage, he answers, probably smiling, "Art thou a king then?" is it not true, after all, that thou art a king? (v. 37.) But Christ, preserving dignity, replies, "Thou sayest (right) that I am a king. To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice." Then Pilate, showing his scepticism, exclaims, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, says John, he went again unto the Jews and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all." (v. 38.) But "they were the more fierce, saying, he stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." So Luke xxiii, 5. They purposely and invidiously mention Galilee, as that province was renowned particularly for the seditious dispositions of its inhabitants. On farther inquiry, Pilate is informed by the Jews that the prisoner is a Galilean, and knowing that Herod Antipas, under whose jurisdiction he consequently belonged, was just then at Jerusalem on account of the feast, he sends them all there, glad to get rid of this unwelcome business.

To anticipate the kind of reception with which Christ was to meet there, it is sufficient to remember that this was the same Herod who had married his own brother's wife, and upon whom the faithful and solemn entreaties and instructions of John the Baptist had been worse than lost. Crime had seared his conscience, and

dissipation and self-conceit had debased his heart. The thoughtless sensualist, equally circumscribed in influence and intellect, was accustomed to feed deliciously upon the gross flatteries of empty-headed courtiers, and upon banquetting, revelry, and the mean and silly tricks of travelling jugglers. He was now "exceedingly glad" (Luke xxiii, 8) to see Jesus, and had been long desirous to see him; and he hoped he would have "seen some *miracle* done by him" to make him stare or laugh. Hence he condescended to question the poor prisoner "in many words;" while the Jews, on the other hand, trembling for their perishing cause, poured a stream of complaints and lies into his ear, about the criminality of this his dangerous and aspiring subject. And it is delightful to observe that our blessed Lord did cast not so much as one pearl before that man, nor open his mouth once to clear his character from charges which carried their refutation with them. "But he answered him nothing," says Luke. One knave will easily find out another. Herod was perfectly prepared to appreciate the motives of the high priests and Jews, and the weight of their testimony, of which he never believed a word; but provoked and offended by the becoming conduct of Christ, he begins to revile him, in which he is duly assisted by his courtiers, who of course admired everything he did and said. (Luke xxiii.) They "set Christ at nought" and arraying him gorgeously in a white robe, they sent him and his disappointed prosecutors back to Pilate. "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves." (v. 12.)

Ah! the matter fares miserably for the Jews. The sun rises higher and higher, the holy feast draws near, two courts of justice (so called) have, on the whole, pronounced the defendant innocent, and yet he must be despatched *soon*; for if his numerous friends learn that he is on trial, they may inquire into the matter, and then the venerable Sanhedrim will appear to no singular advantage. It is plain, they must prevail on *Pilate* now to kill him, and succeed they *must*, or their character and influence are at an end.

Determined to carry their purpose through, they arrive again before the judgment hall of Pilate. But Pilate is rather strengthened in his purpose not to yield, and begins to plead the cause of innocence himself to some extent. It was moreover about this time that his wife sent unto him, communicating to him a dream about which her own mind was much exercised, and which had, according to her opinion, reference to the present affair, and contained a warning to Pilate not to stain his conscience with the murder of this just person. "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and behold I have examined him before you, and have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and lo! nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.) And they cried out all at once, saying, away with this man and release us Barabbas, who, for a certain sedition made in the city and for murder, was cast into prison. Pilate therefore, still willing to release Jesus, spake again

unto them in his behalf. But they cried, saying, Crucify him! And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go. And they were *instant with loud voices* requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed," waxing stronger and stronger. Then took Pilate Jesus and scourged him, against his own better knowledge and conscience, hoping by that affecting scene to touch the tiger-hearts of the mob. And after having scourged him, the soldiers placed a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe upon him, and said tauntingly, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore, hoping now to effect his weak purpose, went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, (stripped of his garments, scourged and bleeding) wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! the poor sufferer, who has done no harm! Let it be enough now of revenge and cruelty! But when the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out—horror strikes me as I rehearse it—"crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate shrinks with terror from the thought,—*"Take ye him,"* he says, *"and crucify him; for I find no fault in him."* The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Another falsehood. They have no such law, and never did have anything like it. They could not have had it.

According to this law they would have been obliged to crucify their own expected Messiah, who by the tenor of the second Psalm was acknowledged by *themselves* to be the Son of God. And ah! had they had such a law, how carefully would they have preserved it to the present day! Upon this, Pilate, terrified and amazed, leads Christ once more into the judgment hall and asks him, "Whence art thou?" but receives no answer. The time of our Lord was now come. The last word of self-defence was uttered. Then saith Pilate unto him, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee and have power to release thee?" To which our Lord replies in substance, *Thou* hast no power over me except by a particular divine dispensation. Nor do I blame thee so much; those who delivered me unto thee, they will bear the chief curse. Overcome by this remark, so full of meaning, Pilate determines to make still farther efforts to save him. "But the Jews cried out, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar!" (v. 12.) "When Pilate heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, in a place that is called the Pavement." (v. 13.) Desirous and decided now to make an end, but still anxious to save the sufferer, and showing that their last remark did not affect him, he says, "Behold your king!" But they cried out, "Away with him, away with him! crucify him!" Pilate saith unto them, shall I crucify your king? (appealing to their national pride.) The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cesar." Then, "when Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing,

but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it! Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us and on our children." (Matt. xxvii, 24, etc.) "Then delivered he him unto them to be crucified." The insults and abuses of the soldiers and others then seem to have begun afresh with redoubled fury, (compare Matthew xxvii, 27) and preparations for his execution were fast made.

Numerous reflections now press themselves. But our time is elapsed. However, I will close with a few hints to those who may wish to dwell upon this story still more to-day.

1. It was not only a murder on the part of the Jews, but it was a conscious and deliberate murder, and one too which required a most surprising degree of determination and desperate perseverance.

2. Pilate presents us with a most instructive example of the folly and wickedness of a time-serving spirit; though his fine sensibilities make him more an object of sympathy and pity than of that abhorrence in which he is generally held by good people. Herod deserves no attention, and the lesson we can learn of him may be learned of any one epicurian wretch of the most common kind.

3. The character of our Lord was cleared to perfection by friends and foes; his conduct exhibits the *ideal of suffering holiness* beyond the stretch of human thought and invention, and is a more powerful proof of his being *more than man*, than the whole assemblage of

his miracles are or could be. While he suffers, he is the perfect conqueror of, and king over, all his accusers and judges, whether Jews or Gentiles.

4. He is a golden mirror to us who are Christians. This is the spirit for which we ought to ask, which we ought to seek — nay, which we have in a small degree indeed, but in a degree marked, perceptible and growing, if we are Christians in reality.

5. What he suffered, he suffered for us, and more than that, he suffered it *by* us ; *we* were among the Jews, the high-priests, the band ; we betrayed, caught, denied, scourged, murdered him. But we hope, some of us at least, that we have sincerely repented, and received the pardon of our sins, and a new heart. May this be so ! For if it should prove false, then shall we go ere long to that place where those high-priests, captains, Jews, Herod, Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, and perhaps Pilate, have been near eighteen hundred years, weeping and gnashing their teeth ; and will weep and gnash there until their innocent victim shall cease to sit “ on the right hand of power.”

MEDITATIONS.

VI.

BEHOLD YOUR KING.

“Behold your King!” — John xix, 14.

“Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals and in the day of the gladness of his heart.” Thus you are addressed by the sacred poet, who, when he wrote that “song of songs,” which [our adversaries being judges] is the most exquisite ever written, depicted with colors and images borrowed from conjugal love and tenderness, those indissoluble and holy affections which unite Christ and the church. Whether the passage quoted has particular reference to the great marriage supper of the Lamb, yet to come, when “the holy city, new Jerusalem, shall come down from God out of Heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;” or whether its object is to lead the pious heart to a devout

consideration of Christ in the beauty of his sufferings, when he purchased with the ransom of his blood his beloved church, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing : this, and all like questions, a Christian may safely leave to the critics, and, following the drawings of a sanctified heart, make such a use of it for himself as would seem best to assist him in devotion and to benefit and warm his heart.

I have used it, to call your attention to the affecting spectacle which the suffering Jesus presented when Pilate led him forth, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns and with an old scarlet mantle mockingly thrown upon him, vainly endeavoring to call forth the national pride of an abject, enfuried and reprobate priesthood and mob. A few moments previously, Pilate had made an attempt to excite their commiseration by leading forth our Lord when he was already in this affecting condition ; but he found the tender mercies of the wicked cruel indeed. Then followed his equally unsuccessful appeal to their patriotism ; and when this also failed, he delivered up Jesus to be crucified. Like unto Pilate, but with different motives and different feelings I hope, and to a different assembly, I lead him forth. And in doing so, what fitter words could I have used, to awaken the sensibilities of every pious heart, than the words of our sacred poet : Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, etc.

Few and plain shall be my words to-day, beloved hearers. Learning is of all things the very last for which I could now wish. There are neither hard words, no hard things to be explained to-day. Nor

do I even wish for the glowing imagination or the peering intellect of great men, or higher spirits. No ! I want the humble, penitent, believing, loving, grateful, and devout heart ; I want the plain, unvarnished impression of my subject, and then as much utterance as the plain impression itself would suggest, so that the fact may speak for itself. May I have every needed assistance and gift in the performance of my present solemn task.

Christ, as he was led forth by Pilate, shall be the object of our prayerful attention at this time. To obtain a more correct and complete impression of the spectacle, we shall have to look at it from three different points of view, as it were. Doing this, the subject will come before our minds under the following three divisions :

I. The condemnation of Christ at the bar of Pilate, and the sufferings he experienced there.

II. Their cause.

III. Their effect.

I. To attempt to make a correct and adequate impression upon you, as to the feelings of Christ when Pilate led him forth the last time, would indeed be a vain effort. Whatsoever may be the nature of enjoyment and suffering in other worlds, in this world it holds true throughout, that they have very much of the relative and comparative in them, i. e. here we feel satisfied and happy, or displeased and unhappy in our present condition, very much in comparison to what we were in the habit of enjoying or suffering

before ; and hence it comes to pass, in the experience of every day, that the same combination of external circumstances, which fills one with delight, leaves another wholly unaffected, and presents a third one with the very ideal, as he thinks, of wretchedness and distress. A treatment which would elate the heart of a vain and ignorant slave, creates no emotion in the breast of a free citizen, and would deeply wound the feelings of one who has, or thinks he has, a rightful claim upon universal veneration and worship, and who has been in the habit of enjoying them.

You readily apprehend what I am alluding to in these remarks. So far as Christ was divine ; so far as his consciousness extended back into times, or rather into eternities, when he enjoyed the adoration and the praises of a holy and grateful universe, and felt himself absolutely unlimited and supreme throughout his vast creation ; so far as he knew, by an experience extending a whole eternity back, what it is to be God ; — so far it would be madness for us to struggle for a realizing sense of what he must have felt when standing before the raging mob in that most melancholy condition in which you know he then was. We can only speak of him as though he had been a mere man, and then remember that in view of his divine character we are standing at the shores of an unexplored ocean, of whose extent we have no conception.

In respect to his bodily frame, Christ must needs have been much affected by that agitation of mind which his approaching sufferings had occasioned him for some time past, and which no doubt had often robbed him of sleep, when all around him were

sweetly resting and preparing for the duties of the morrow. More still must he have been reduced by the scene of Gethsemane, which, whatsoever particular views may be cherished of it by different men, must be granted by all to have been an awful and most unnatural and overwhelming mental distress. In Gethsemane, probably no more than five or ten minutes after he rose from prayer, he was bound and dragged back to Jerusalem, first to Annas's then to Caiaphas's house, where he was questioned and vexed, standing up all night, till about morning, when the examination was closed, and the remainder of the time was spent in buffeting, beating, and abusing him, till the hour to apply to Pilate was come. Then he was thrust once more through the streets, to Pilate, and from thence, after considerable examination, to Herod. At Herod's court he was again queried and mocked, and then hurried back to Pilate again. After some efforts to release Jesus, Pilate, seeing the fury of the multitude, delivered him to the band of Roman soldiers, to be scourged. This they did ; and being probably bribed by the Jews, they added to the punishment ordered by law their own newly-invented inhumanities, plating a crown of thorns and pressing it upon his head, putting an old purple robe upon him, smiting him with their hands, and tauntingly saluting him as a King. And you may imagine what that meant, to have a band of rude soldiers round about him, who were paid for their barbarities, and who wreaked their savage, spiteful rage upon a poor Jew, as they thought him to be, and upon whom they would have much less compassion than upon some favored animal.

But the chastisement inflicted by order is already enough, in itself, to make one shudder. When a person was scourged previously to crucifixion, he was stripped of his garments, except something tied around the loins. In this condition he was fastened to a post, or pillar, and beaten. The instrument of torture was a whip, with a large number of strings or thongs of leather, interlaced with little hooks so as to immediately penetrate the flesh and lay open every vessel which they touched. The Romans used to call it "horibile flagellum," the horrible whip, and it was applied only to slaves. Such was the severity of this flagellation, that numbers of the stoutest and, as to bodily constitution, most hardened malefactors expired under it. It may assist us in getting an adequate idea of the barbarity of this punishment, when we remember that not even the well-known inhuman Russian knout is fatal, unless the blows are purposely directed to the lungs, while the Roman whip carried death with it in not a few instances in its ordinary application.

I should doubtless be treading the footsteps of Pilate, if I endeavored to work upon your feelings by exaggerating the sufferings of Jesus in this instance, and by representing the soldiers as making peculiar efforts to render them severe, while I had no reason or ground so to do. But I can leave it with any one of you to say whether those who invented even new tortures and exulted in the agonies of their victim, to whom they showed not a spark of pity, — whether these men, I say, were at all likely to treat him with lenity, or to inflict upon him anything less than the utmost implied in the unrighteous charge of Pilate. Ah ! there is not

a shadow of ground for such a supposition ; and we have to admit as mere critics the high probability that our Lord experienced a flagellation equal to anything ever executed of this kind. Indeed, this is even implied in Pilate's own words, when he brought him out to the people the first time after the execution of his cruel order, "Behold the man." Behold the extraordinary, heart-dissolving sight, he wanted to say. Is he not scourged and lacerated enough now to satisfy your rage and your envy ? Let the sight of your eyes affect your hearts, and let me now release him ! How could Pilate have said so, if Christ had not exhibited a more pitiful spectacle than that witnessed at other times in similar instances. Why, the people could have answered him, Behold the man ! — what is there to behold ? — we have seen a hundred culprits scourged like him, and more too ; *that* is nothing worth beholding yet ! But they say no such thing. They admit the spectacle to be extraordinary, and merely keep roaring out, "Crucify him ! crucify him !" And here let me just notice, in passing, the doubt entertained and repeated over and over again by infidels, respecting the reality of Christ's death upon the cross. Even very lately it has been maintained that it was to the highest degree improbable that he really died, but that he to all appearance merely fell into a swoon and was afterwards awaked again by the efforts of his friends, etc. How could he die in six hours, it is said, when others lived two, three, and even six and seven days upon the cross, and either died of hunger, or were torn by wild beasts ? But that many others did not even survive

the flagellation, or if they did, were treated with some degree of lenity, came to the punishment with robust constitutions and were weakened by no previous agonizing struggles, is taken into no account by these men. To me it is a wonder that he did not expire under the hand of the soldiers ; that he could stand yet upon his feet after the scourging ; that he could walk out of the city ; that he could for some time even bear his own cross ; that he could mount up the hill of Golgotha, and at last endure full six hours upon the cross, conversing and praying to the end. To me it is in the highest degree probable that something more than the strength of his human frame was necessary to carry him through all these horrors ; yes, something more. He could not be permitted to die in Gethsemane, — he could not, for the same reason, die in Pilate's hall ; *he must die on the cross*, for (as I have already remarked formerly) it is written "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" and again it is written, "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." And it was only when that purpose was accomplished and his last words were uttered, that the sustaining power withdrew, his frame yielded to the accumulated causes of dissolution, and he yielded up his spirit.

When, therefore, Christ was led forth by Pilate, he certainly presented a spectacle of suffering uncommon even in those days. His shoulders, his back, half his arms, and his breast were lacerated by the whip, and probably in many places to the very bones ; his coun-

tenance was disfigured and swollen by the violent blows of the soldiers, which he had just received in addition to those already inflicted upon him by the Jews the night previous ; to his wounded left shoulder and breast and half his back was cleaving an old military cloak of purple, which was thrown upon him and hooked, as the fashion then was, upon the right shoulder ; in his hand he had a reed, mockingly alluding to the staves which the commanders of Roman armies and kings used to hold in their hands ; and upon his head was fastened by repeated blows (compare Matthew xxvii, 30) a wreath of thorns representing either a royal diadem, or perhaps the laurel wreath of a conqueror. And worthy of notice is the remark of a late and able commentator, that in reference to the crown of thorns, some abatement should be made ; because, had it been of pure thorns, he might have been mortally wounded by it, or at least must needs have fainted away under the torment. But where do you read of that abatement, in scripture ? And to all this you will of course add the nudity and trembling of his limbs, the paleness of his body, the submissive meekness of his countenance, the anxious bosom heaving still with the apprehension of tortures to come ; the agitation of his lungs, and the feverish excitement of his whole system, occasioned by the cruel flagellation.

Thus Pilate led him forth to the Jews. Thus I lead him forth to you ; and I have no hesitation, in the words of the Roman governor, though in a far different sense, to exclaim, 'Behold your King.' To the world, I know he has no form nor comeliness in this sad pre-

dicament ; but to souls convinced of sin, and to the true believer, it is just so that he is the Chief among ten thousand and the One altogether lovely. O yes, the more abused and dishonored for our sakes, the more unlovely to the world, the more a man of sorrows, the more bruised, stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, the more beautiful, the more lovely, the more admirable he is to us. Know it, proud and haughty world, we are not ashamed of him so. No ! And O ! may he never be ashamed of us ! It is in the beauty of his sufferings that he is the object of our supreme affection. Thus he drew us in the day of his power, and we ran after him. It is thus that we love him and seek him on our beds in the night-season. And though we may often well say, “The watchmen that went about the city found me ; they smote me ; they wounded me ; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me ;” yet we seek him still. And though we love him but little, yet, while we have a spark of faith and love in our hearts, we cease not to cry, “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love.” And if we have now, and shall hereafter have any interest in him, it is just so that he is our delight in life, and will be our consolation in death, and our eternal song in Heaven. Thus he is our King forevermore. Yes, our King ! For while we see him in the very gulf of abject sufferings and distress, the eye of our faith can well discern the moral, heavenly beauty and perfection of the unique sight ; our commiseration is quickly absorbed by admiration and humble worship ; and our tears of sorrow

and pity are quickly dried up by the fire of love and joy; and in a little while we can only weep the sweet tear of penitent affection and tender gratitude. True, we see a sufferer before us, bruised, abused, mocked, despised and condemned to death: but we see an unconvicted, innocent sufferer, a holy sufferer, one who suffers freely and out of love to his enemies, a divine sufferer. Yes, he is our King, he is our King. Know it, ye heavens above, and rejoice with us. He is our King! Know it, thou distracted world, and wonder, gainsay and perish! He is our King! Know it hell beneath, and tremble to the very centre! He is our King for evermore!

II. Thus far we have looked at the scene from a distance. We have as it were occupied an honorable place in the windows or gallery of some neighboring house, and the mad crowd before Pilate's door has been raving beneath our feet. But we must descend now, unexpected as it may be to you, my hearers, and humbling and mortifying as it may be to us all, I must lead you down and with you take a place among the Jews in the street below, and among the heathen soldiers in the judgment hall. For we now inquire, what was the cause of our Lord's condemnation, flagellation and abuse, and who were the true agents in them?

Here I answer without hesitation, *Our sins were the cause — we were the agents.* Few words will be needed to establish that. An appeal to the word of God and to your own consciences will suffice, if anything can convince you.

Thus much is plain, that he was not condemned, scourged, and mocked because he had no means of resistance. He had them abundantly. As the Jews and their assistants did not seize and bind him and drag him away from Gethsemane because they were many and stout, and he alone and weak, — and as the Sanhedrim did not wrong and abuse him because they were the very strength of the nation at that time; so Pilate did not condemn him and deliver him up by the power and authority of his office; nor did the soldiers tie him to the pillar and subject him to the horrible whip because they had helmets on their head and shields and swords and spears about them, or because they were a band of muscular men, used to the battle. All this was not sufficient, nor could it have been made so by any multiplication whatsoever, to account for the event before us. No! as twelve legions of angels, and indeed all the hosts of Heaven were at the command of Christ in Gethsemane, so they were when he stood before Pilate; so they were when he writhed under the hands of his torturers in the judgment hall. But even that help he did not need. One word from his lips did prostrate the whole band who came to seize him in the garden; another word would have laid all his enemies in and about the pretorium into the dust. He said to Pilate openly, Thou hast no power over me at all in the common course of things, but by a particular divine dispensation; and even Pilate felt the propriety of the remark. He was then what he always had been and always will be. He who overthrew heavenly principalities and consigned them to eternal chains of darkness, could have made both Pilate and Tiberius

crouch before his feet. He who could hurl stars and worlds before his face as chaff, could have scattered that handful of his clamorous foes with a nod. It was, then, not the power of Pilate, which commanded Christ, nor did the mere hands and fists of the Jews and the soldiers reduce him to that condition, in which we find him to-day. The clamor of the Jews did not bring about his condemnation for being so overwhelming and so pertinacious. What, then, did it? you ask. If they were not the proper agents in the matter, what is the cause? who are the agents? where are they? I answer with the prophet, "He was wounded for our transgressions, — he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," (Isaiah liii, 5.) Here is the mystery unravelled; here is the cause, here are the agents. Our sins did it, that is to say, *we did it*. We tormented and abused and crucified him. Like a lamb he entered in among us, a herd of grievous, starving wolves. "Here am I (he cried) take me, tear me to pieces, eat my flesh, suck my blood, if it can do you any good." We did tear him to pieces. And, blessed be God forever, his flesh does do us good; for it does satisfy our raging hunger; it is according to his own words, that bread which came down from heaven and of which, if any man eat, he shall live forever. His blood! O yes, it does us good, for it "cleanseth from all sins."

My friends, I have led you down, and have put you among the raving Jews; and now I ask you, is it not your appropriate place? Do you deserve a better one? I do not. It is but too true, you do not. We are no

better than the adversaries and tormentors of Christ in our scene. When we were groveling in that common, low, stupid impenitence which is the choice and condemnation of the mass of men, then did we stand among the satellites of the priests and the elders, and cried, Crucify, crucify him! When we rose a little higher to polished and popular religious habits, and put on the beautiful, embroidered garment of self-righteousness, or the toga of a vain philosophy, when we sought to make good works, or some system of our own framing upset and supplant the doctrine of the cross, then did we sit in Caiaphas's house, worthy members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, and seeking false witnesses against Christ, but finding none. When we judged and condemned his people because they were imperfect, or when we conformed to the world, knowingly, and against our conscience, then did we deny him with Peter and condemn him with Pilate. Our avarice often sold him for less than thirty pieces of silver; our desire to break away from every restraint of religion and of divine laws bound his hands and tied him to the dreadful pillar in the judgment hall; our early youthful vanity stripped him of his simple and necessary garments; our pride, our aspiration to worldly greatness threw the purple robe over his shoulders and crowned him with thorns; our epicurian desires for everything which struck and allured our senses and our wickedness in its ten thousand names and forms laid the horrible whip over his tender body and inflicted his numberless wounds upon him. We did it — we did it; and well might our souls melt with sorrow and our eyes dissolve in tears. The man who

can look at this picture without a tear, has a heart of stone.

And now, my friends, I ask you, after you have done all this to your innocent Saviour, will you do so still? Will you still keep roaring out 'Crucify him!' Will you still betray, sell, deny, condemn, and bind him? Will you still buffet, and scourge him, and mock him? If so, then you are still among the Jews, you are one of the high-priests and elders; you sit down with the Sanhedrim, and with Pilate upon the judgment seat; you are one of the rude and barbarous band of soldiers; and if you do not follow Judas in his death, you will certainly follow him in his doom, and take your place for a long eternity with all the enemies of Christ.

III. I now proceed to invite all those who have forsaken, or are willing immediately to forsake the ranks of the enemies of Christ, to the consideration of our third topic.

Here we shall have to change our place once more. And it will perhaps be again quite unexpected to some of you, if I assign you not a more honorable place than that which you now so gladly leave, but a much less honorable one. Yes, the place we now take is much more mortifying, humbling and despised than the one we just occupied; but it is also much safer; and I think after a little while you will love to be there.

We now gather round about Barabbas, "who, for a certain sedition made in the city and for murder, was cast into prison." (Luke xxiii, 19.)

We need not blush to get into his company; before

the bar of God, we are already in it. He was a rebel against lawful civil authority; he was a murderer; he was caught and imprisoned, and awaited his sentence of death. If you take this definition of his character, life and condition, and removing it from its political ground to the one of Jehovah's universal theocracy; if you put God for Tiberius, the law of heaven and of all the universe for the Roman law; if you put the Son of God and your own and a thousand other souls for a simple man murdered, and for every transitory and finite relation, motive and consequence in Barabbas's case, its corresponding, eternal, and spiritual reality, — then, what more faithful definition of our character and our lives as sinners, and of our situation as prisoners for the great day of account, can you desire, than that given by Luke to Barabbas? We have rebelled against God, and broken his holy law; we have slain our own souls, and have enticed others and assisted them to do the same to themselves; we have crucified the Son of God; we are seized and shut up in the hand of Omnipotence, and the dread day of account draws near. Before the bar of Pilate, indeed, we are not like Barabbas: before the bar of God we are like him.

It is not easy to realize the emotions of Barabbas as he stood before Pilate's house, bound and ready to be condemned to crucifixion. What fluctuations of hope and fear, of joy and misgiving must have agitated his breast while the Jews strove for his release on the one hand and Pilate employed every means of persuasion on the other to bring him into ruin. One hour after another passed away; neither party seemed to yield; and even when he saw the young Rabbi so

severely scourged, Pilate's desire to save that man was not at all abated, and the avenging sword of justice remained still hanging over his own defenceless head. At last the crowd prevailed; Pilate, wearied and worn out, condemned the innocent; and he, the murderer, was dismissed unpunished.

Here the feelings of the upright man may be powerfully roused, and the most perfect abhorrence at the unjust proceedings of this arbitrary bar of so called justice may fill his bosom. But the eye of faith doeth not stop at the bar of Pilate. Back it wings its way, on the pinions of revelation, to that distant but momentous hour when the same cause was agitated in the court of Heaven, though plead by very different pleaders; and was decided by the judge of all in the same manner, though from motives as far above Pilate's as the heavens are high above the earth. Pilate's court and sentence are mere consequences of that, mere shadows of it thrown upon the pages of the history of our globe by a thousand refractions, in the fullness of time. You all remember the passage in the revelation of St. John, which speaks of the Lamb of God as slain "from the foundation of the world." This points to a judicial transaction in Heaven which had reference to the redemption of our race. We know the issue; and of course we know, so far at least, also the decisions of that holy council.

A world had rebelled, and was fallen. The inviolable law was broken, and the world rebellious, being inhabited by immortal beings, the penalty of endless ruin must be exacted; for, if not endless, then the time of punishment, however long, must needs dwindle into a

mere nothing in comparison to an eternity of bliss that would follow it, and therefore could subserve no purpose in deterring other unstable minds from transgressing the law still farther; other equally momentous considerations not to mention. Countless immortal minds and moral agents apprised of the rebellion must have been in awful suspense, whether the pledge of the supreme Lawgiver would now be redeemed, and the law magnified in the eternal destruction of a fallen world; or whether indefinite mercy would be extended to them, the law itself thus virtually abrogated, and the most alarming and irrevocable doubt and darkness thrown over the moral character of God, and the stability of his government, the character of God, the only ground of hope, the only warrant for their holy joys through all eternity to come. Here was a dreadful alternative; a world to be devoured by eternal fire, or the peace of every holy being taken away. The latter being wholly inadmissible, the ruin of our guilty world seemed unavoidable. No created arm could save, but the uncreated arm could. Every sensitive being, as such, has private interests which can be sacrificed not only with no impeachment to the moral character of the agent, but to its great honor and credit. Scripture and reason reveal God as a sensitive being. The Son of the Father could be given up, and give up himself; the Word could become flesh, and make a free, personal atonement for sinners. He was willing. Then stood this fallen world, the rebel, the murderer, we among the rest, on one side, he on the other. Justice plead for him, mercy for us. Mercy rejoiced against judgment. The great fact of Redemp-

tion proves it, and shows the result and consequences of the holy session. Christ became amenable to the broken law; the rebellious world was cleared. Hitherto the holy zealous God, the just one who could not and would not clear the guilty, had been her offended Sovereign,—now Christ, the Saviour, the friend of sinners, the prince of peace, became her king exclusive, until that time when the whole purpose of his incarnation shall be accomplished, and this world return to her primeval relation in the moral universe, not without an eternal remembrance and worship of their Saviour from ruin. (Compare 1 Corinthians xv, 24. &c. and Revelation v, 12, 13.) Christ thus became the dispenser of every mercy, and the disposer of every event and change in the ancient dispensation; and so he is now. He was the spiritual Rock that followed Israel in the wilderness—(1 Corinthians x, 4); in him did the patriarchs and prophets believe and hope; his spirit they had, his servants they were. Methinks I see him led forth from the court of Heaven after that solemn transaction; and while he is presented to a trembling world of perishing sinners who had forfeited their blessed relation to a holy and just God, I hear the joyful proclamation made by angel choirs accompanied by the harpers of Heaven harping with their harps, Behold your King, Behold your King, ye trembling sinners. Take fresh courage and strike up a joyful hymn of praise! The great case is decided; mercy has triumphed; the sentence is passed, recorded and sealed with the seal of eternity. Your sins are his; his righteousness is yours; and let every perishing sinner now gather up close to him who can and will save his soul from death.

My soul stands erect with joy; my steadfast eye looks down into the prison of the archfiend, and my unfaltering voice demands, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" I glance over the plains of Heaven, — nor do I shrink as my eye approaches the cloud, and the darkness which hides from created eyes the consuming brightness of that inaccessible light in which God himself dwelleth, — and I ask, with a boldness tempered with humility and awe, but not with fear, "Who is he that condemneth?" — But I look also down to earth, and as I behold the bar of Pilate again, and behold the meek, lowly, innocent, the perfect, the holy, divine, maltreated Jesus, — the very instant melts both heart and eye, and that all conquering love which triumphed in Heaven, triumphs also in the sinful breast, and forth bursts the involuntary exclamation, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I lead him forth once more — "Behold your King." Drink in, in draughts long and full, the precious impression of the scene. Every feature is a fountain of spiritual joys, and a storehouse of omnipotent motives to a holy life. Mark the paleness of his countenance, the sadness of his downcast eye, the sweat of anguish mingled with blood on his brow, and flowing down his breast and shoulders and arms;

then turn to the fashionable vanities of this world, and they will appear as they ought, — “base as the dirt beneath your feet.” Look at the nudity of his insulted body, and see then how accumulated riches will appear! Bring hither all the pomp and dress, the crowns, purples and scepters of earth, put them beside his crown of thorns, his ragged purple robe, and his reed, and say if you could choose them, could you parade in them? Witness the meekness of his conduct, the silence of his lips while thousands cry out, crucify him! crucify him! and then dare repine at sufferings for his name’s sake, and retort injuries to your persecutors! In one word, look at Him, and then attempt it, and follow the world again if you can. I know you cannot—you will not. He who can and will do this is a demon—not a man; and the sovereign remedy of salvation having failed to meet his case, he will go to the fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

“Behold your king!” Now you hear it from lips of dust, and you rejoice, brethren. You rejoice to behold him, the despised and rejected, crowned with thorns, beaten, bruised, clothed in rags of mockery, and near to an ignominious death. He is your king, the condemned at Pilate’s bar. But as you stand at Pilate’s bar around him whom your soul loveth, look up! Do you see the blue sky over you? From thence he will come ere long and will not tarry. Then will he wear a crown, not of thorns, but of thousand thousand suns. Then his imperial garment, not a robe of purple dust, but one inwoven with light, will blaze like an ocean of melted diamond, and seraphs will hide their faces. Then, not a reed, but the omnipotent sceptre of the

universe will grace his pierced hand. He will not stand then to be judged of ungrateful worms, but he will sit to judge the world in righteousness. No clamorous Jews, no profane heathens will crowd his sacred person; but submissive angels without number will surround him in respectful distance, to fly to the execution of his nod. His lips will not be silent, but will speak, in the harmonious accents of Heaven, eternal peace to the righteous, and shake earth and hell with the thunder of his just irrevocable sentence. The new heavens will proclaim it with joy, He is our king! the new earth will echo back the joyful sentence; and as the swelling sound rolls on and breaks at last upon the distant gates of hell, Omnipotence will extort from its reprobated inmates the confession. He whom we crowned with thorns, mocked, buffeted, and crucified, rules the universe with the sceptre of his love, or the iron rod of his insufferable indignation. *Every knee shall bow unto him, and every tongue confess him Lord.*

Take it with you, brethren and sisters, the dear word — “Behold your King!” Behold him by faith, while you sojourn here below — and soon, soon you shall see him as he is. The unconverted of my hearers may retire at this time with the solemn admonition of the Psalmist; kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him! Amen.

MEDITATIONS.

VII.

THE SCENE OF GOLGOTHA.

MATTHEW XXVII, 32—56.

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name : him they compelled to bear his cross. And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, A place of a skull, they gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall : and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down, they watched him there : and set up over his head his accusation, written, **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS**. Then were there two thieves crucified with him ; one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him ; for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge,

and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many. Now when the centurian, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him; among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

(Compare Mark xv. 21—41; Luke xxiii. 26—49; John xix. 17—37.)

IF we were called upon to be present at the death-bed of one of our most endeared friends—perhaps that of a tender-hearted and faithful father, or of a pious, praying mother, or of a dear, well-trying partner, or of a godly brother or sister, or a beloved child,—certainly we should prepare ourselves to attend the solemn and affecting scene with the most collected and serious frame of mind. At the sufferings and the struggles of the beloved object, the most tender emotions would agitate our breast. Our bosoms would heave with his bosom and our eye would melt with every painful motion of his countenance. We should suffer, we should agonize, we should die, as it were, with him. At the near and awful view of eternity and eternal things, the oblivion of earth and of every perishable object would, like an impenetrable curtain, draw itself around us and the couch of our departing friend, and for one hour at least,—an hour of deep interest and of incalculable bearings upon our own approaching death and future state—it would wipe out the usurped importance of sublunary things; and we should feel, perhaps for the first time, that there is

but a step between us and between death, the grave, judgment and Heaven, or hell, and — what throws a mountain-weight of importance into the scale of all this — that ETERNITY which will then seal our state, and put a period to time, probation, and change forever.

But what if the dying friend of our heart had been brought upon the bed of anguish and death for *our sakes*? What if he had saved us from drowning by throwing himself after us into the deep — had seized upon us with the determination not to let us go while life and strength remained in him — was hastening into the grave by the consequences of over exertion, and wished now to see us once more, and rejoicing that we are but saved, desired to bid us the last farewell? What if he had rescued us from the swords or guns of our enemies that were stronger than we, and was now dying with the deep and remediless wounds which he then received? Or if he had dashed through the flames of our dwelling to pluck us from the bed of languishing, and to carry us out into a place of safety and comfort, and we, recovered and in health, were now called upon to listen to his dying groans? What a torrent of emotion would rush upon us! Feelings of obligation and a sense of gratitude due to him, almost insufferable, would overwhelm us; sympathies, tender as the softest chord of a mother's bosom, would thrill through every nerve of our frame; and the ardent wish, now *to die for him*, would be but the voice of fallen nature. All this, and infinitely more, comes before us to-day, my friends. Our friend dieth — our best friend in Heaven and on earth; our brother dieth — our beloved, our faithful brother; our Lord, the Saviour of our perishing souls, our eternal

King, draws near the fatal hour. Sorrows gather around him like the foaming waves of the ocean; and death, in its most appalling form, death, in its royal pomp of terror, death, with its most chosen weapons of torture, has marched forth, stands in battle array about him, and has levelled the whole artillery of hell at his broken heart. From Heaven he came down, he dashed in among the powers of darkness and into the jaws of death and hell, to rescue us from thence; and he did it. But not without the mortal wound predicted by the word of prophecy. He dies: he dies for us: he dies that we might live; and he calls us to-day to gather around his dying bed. His dying bed? O, that it was a bed! Alas! it is his dying cross — a *rough block*, to which he is nailed in the most painful position; not a soft pillow on which he rests, — it is the shameful, painful, accursed tree.

Let us draw near, then, with that solemnity of mind befitting the scene of our consideration, and we shall not draw near in vain. Sweet consolations and comforts, precious above gold and pearls, will flow from his wounded side; and the impressions which the beauty of his sufferings and death will then make upon us, will be such as Heaven and eternity will only deepen and purify — but never, never efface.

We shall have time merely to pass over the account of our Lord's crucifixion, without any farther subdivision; and all that I shall endeavor to do, will be to add such remarks to the passages of Scripture which will need to be quoted as will give us the shortest possible impression of the event which we are capable of receiving.

The scene of our present text was preceded by the capture of Christ, his arraignment before Pilate, and his condemnation and flagellation. The sentence of his death was no sooner pronounced, when, after a short repetition of the insults already offered to him previous to his condemnation, he was hurried to the place of execution. This was the usual practice; and in this case it became the more necessary, since the great feast of the passover was close at hand.

It would be a vain endeavor to trace the way by which Christ went out of the city; since we are utterly unable to tell where the house of Pilate stood. Nay, not even of the hill of Golgotha has there remained a trace after the destruction of the city. For the hill now exhibited under that name is far from being the one; and the awe with which thousands approach that spot, and the idolatry which some practice there, are equally without the shadow of a foundation.

“And he, bearing his cross, went forth;” so John. This was the custom of the time, and a part of the punishment. It is probable that a quantity of crosses were always kept on hand by Pilate, lying in his yard or standing in the judgment hall, and that our Lord took up the one designed for him on that spot. “And there were also two other malefactors led with him to be put to death:” Luke xxiii, 32.

A cross was a block of wood, of considerable thickness, and sufficiently high to be driven at least two feet into the ground, and then still to stand out far enough to raise the individual fastened upon it about three feet above the surface of the earth. Adding to this, the usual length of a man, nine or ten feet of height

must be allowed to a cross. To this block, near the upper end, was fastened a cross piece of five or six feet in length, (the arms and the breast of a man being equal to his height;) and thus the whole of a cross would amount to a beam of timber from fifteen to sixteen feet in length.

No wonder, then, that our Lord, after the cruel treatment he had experienced since the preceding night and especially after his horrid flagellation and the serious loss of blood occasioned by it, was unable to bear upon his lacerated shoulders so considerable a weight as his cross must have been. Tradition would make us believe that he fell three times under his burden. That he did fall once, at least, is in the highest degree probable, from the nature of the case, even if the tradition alluded to deserves no attention. At all events, the aid which his executioners allowed him, when they compelled Simon of Cyrene, probably a believer, to bear, or to help him bear, his cross, evidently shows that he was unable to proceed unassisted with the expedition they desired; for pity, we have already seen, is not what we can reasonably expect to have led them to this measure. Rather shall we have to suppose that every severity was previously exercised by them, by way of scolding, pushing and striking, to make him perform the task unassisted, and they yielded only to absolute necessity.

Notwithstanding the early hour and the approaching feast, Luke informs us "there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which latter also bewailed and lamented him:"—Luke xxv, 27—31. Many of the most intimate friends of our Lord must

have been present at Jerusalem on account of the passover. Many of the pious women, too, who had ministered unto him of their substance, must have been there. Some of them, indeed, we shall meet hereafter. When the affrighted disciples dispersed, the night previous, we must, of course, suppose that, having no homes of their own at Jerusalem, they scattered abroad, and hid themselves wherever they knew a disciple of Christ; and it is not even improbable that some crossed the mount of Olives, to bear the sad tidings to their own and their master's beloved friends at Bethany. It is therefore not surprising that, towards the close of the iniquitous transactions at Pilate's bar, a considerable number of well-disposed and pious persons were gathered together. Their silent grief and tears would easily rouse the sympathies of many among the people, whose pliable and unstable hearts yielded to every impression of grief or joy, of seriousness or dissipation—a class of persons which has ever been numerous, especially among the female sex; and thus we need not wonder that a multitude of women, who could just as well laugh and sport the next hour, now burst out in weeping and wailing and lamentations. I do not say that the pious friends of Christ and the godly women who had supported him, did *not* weep. I believe they did; and what an adamant heart must that have been which could not be melted into tender sorrow at the affecting sight! But excess of grief is seldom the fault of the pious; and the answer of our Lord evidently concerns those, who with their children were to be the unhappy sharers in the overthrow of their devoted city. “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not

for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bare and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us, For, if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

About the third hour of the day, according to Mark, (chapter xv, 23) i. e. about nine o'clock in the morning, they arrived at the place of execution. According to the evangelist John, (xix, 14, 15) Christ was not condemned until the sixth hour, and of course could not have been upon Golgotha at the third hour. There are manuscripts which exhibit in John the reading: the "third hour" instead of "the sixth;" and the author of the 'Alexandrine Chronicle' declares that in the autograph of John, kept in the church of Ephesus, the reading was a tually,—(ἤν ὥσκι ὥρα τῆς τρι) it was about the third hour. Thus John and Mark would agree. But be this as it may, it is easy to suppose that John commenced his reckoning about three o'clock in the night; perhaps with the time when Christ was condemned by the Sanhedrim; or some other period which was prominent in his mind. At all events, the statement of Mark is, that which commences with the rising sun. For, according to Matthew and Mark, the sun was not darkened till about the sixth hour, and not, too, until Christ had been hanging on the tree for some time, and abused by the Jews and the people, and until his garments had been parted, and various other things had transpired.

On arriving at the place of execution, they commence

by offering to Christ "vinegar mingled with gall," as Matthew says; which is explained by Mark to have been "wine mingled with myrrh." This vinegar (of Matthew) or wine (according to Mark) was the lowest kind of wine, spiced with myrrh for the purpose of intoxication. "When any person," says the Talmud of Babylon, "was brought forth to be put to death, they gave him to drink some frankincense in a cup of wine, that it might stupify him, as it is said, Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts." And there is a tradition, that the gentlewomen of Jerusalem afforded this of their good will. (Lightf. III. p. 164.) Christ refused this beverage for reasons too obvious to be mentioned.

Then they proceed to the crucifixion without delay. The cross I have already described, as to its shape and size. The usual manner in which malefactors were put to the cross, was the following. The cross was first driven into the ground. Into the perpendicular post, about the middle, there was driven a peg, or wooden pin, upon which the victim was to sit while he remained on the cross, lest the weight of his body should tear his hands from the nails, and he fall down to the ground. Then the criminal, stripped of his dress, except something wound around about the lower part of his body, by a ladder ascended the cross, or, if unable or unwilling to do so, was raised to it by the executioners. He was set upon the peg, his hands and feet were tied with ropes to their respective places, to prevent motion, and then nails were driven through them into the timber, the ropes taken off and the sufferer left to die.

Lately, infidelity would make us believe that to nail the feet of malefactors to the cross was never practised; that their hands only were fastened with nails but their feet simply with ropes. The Christian church, it is said, pretended that the feet of Christ were nailed on merely to save the credit of a certain passage in the twenty-second Psalm, which they think represents him in that predicament. To this, we reply that the assertion has been made without any proof; that the early members of the Christian church had abundant opportunity to *know* the way in which men used to be crucified; and that the very history of our Lord's resurrection proves positively, as we shall see hereafter, that both the hands and the feet of Christ were nailed to the cross. While the soldiers are nailing his hands and feet to the tree, Christ offers up his intercessory prayers for them and for all who were ignorantly engaged in his crucifixion—a prayer whose beauty will never be sufficiently admired. Christ being fastened to the tree and left by the executioners, and while they are putting up the two thieves, one on his right, the other on his left, to mark him, according to the desire of the high priest, as the chief criminal, there was again opportunity for abuse, of which the high-priests and other bystanders avail themselves, with a readiness and zeal which would sink them below the beasts of the field, even if their victim had been guilty of all with which they falsely charged him. Not an ungenerous, brutish, ferocious spirit they exhibit, but an infernal, satanic one; and while the Roman soldiers fulfill one part of the twenty-second Psalm, by dividing and casting lots for Jesus's garments, they fulfill

another part of it by spitting out their venom in the very words of that portion of holy writ. Our Lord's prophecy respecting his resurrection is again distorted by them, and made an instrument of cruel mockery; his rightful claims to be the true Messiah and the King of Israel, his piety and trust in God; nay, his innumerable benefits bestowed upon the poor, lost sheep of the house of Israel, for whom these sanctimonious hierarchs cared nothing;—all, all is converted into reproach and poison, and is hurled into his face. The innumerable evidences he had given of his divine mission are sneered at; and a boastful descent from the cross—a thing directly opposed to his heavenly spirit and his Father's will—is mockingly made the condition of their belief and submission.

There they are, crowding around the cross at a distance, at most, of two or three steps; and as he was raised but about three feet from the ground, the encounter must have been a close one, and he must have been able to hear every whisper and hissing, and to discern every spiteful distortion of their faces. Wagging their heads, as a sign of wonder and contempt, they rail at him, saying, "Ah, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If thou be the Son of God (i. e. the Messiah) come down from the cross!" Thus, those who passed by. But the high priests know how to wound him deeper. They talk to one another in his hearing; and their gestures—you may imagine what they were. "He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted

in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God!" Matthew xxvii, 40 — 43. Yea, was the reply of others, "Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Mark xv. 32. Like-feeling spirits easily mingle, and hence the Roman soldiers and one of the thieves heartily join them in their abuses of Christ. "If thou be the King of Israel, save thyself," the band exclaims; and the reprobate malefactor, railing on him, roars out, saying,— "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." Luke xxiii, 39.

It was about this time that the penitent thief received the pardon of his sins and the promise of Heaven. This subject, however, forming, as it will, our next meditation, must now be passed over in silence. After some hours of abuse, many of the Jews must have been called away by the preparations of the feast, or else they had spent their rage. Then some of the beloved of our Lord were permitted to draw near his cross. "There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene and the disciple," i. e. John. Turning his eyes to his mother and his beloved disciple, he recommends her to the care of the pious youth. This was probably near noon, and Christ had hardly made provision for his aged mother when darkness without and darkness within filled the cup of his sufferings. "Now from the sixth hour (noon) there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." (Matthew, Mark and Luke.) This dreadful darkness of three hours was the preparation for a powerful earthquake, which, however, probably did not precede, but followed the death of Christ.

It was not an ordinary eclipse of the sun, for it was now the full moon. During near the whole time of darkness, Christ seems to have been silent, as also his afflicted friends who stood near the cross weeping and mourning. The revilings both of the Jews and the Romans seem to have ceased, and an awful waiting of what was to come next, seems to have suspended every exercise of their minds and stopped their mouths.

But so much the more powerful were the inward workings of the mind of Christ. A new trial, equally unexpected and terrible, draws near; *inward desertion of God*. Before the Sanhedrim, Pilate, and Herod, he had exhibited all the dignity of suffering holiness; by the way, as he was bending under his heavy cross, he had yet sympathies for the perishing nation, and could declare that his condition, that of oppressed innocence, was preferable to theirs, which was that of suffering wickedness and unbelief. On being nailed to the cross, he could yet say, Father, forgive them; under the abuses of the Jews and the heathen, he felt yet that his judgment was with the Lord, and his work acceptable with his God; and he had yet a Paradise to hope for, and to impart to a repenting sinner; and a few minutes before the darkness spread over the land he had calmness of mind sufficient to provide for the temporal comforts of his mother. But *now* his mind is overwhelmed with distressing doubts. He knows no more what to think of himself, of his Father in Heaven, of his cause, of his own sufferings and death, of his doctrine, of his prospects, of God's promises, of this perishing world. In vain he struggles for light and assurance; cloud upon cloud rises, billow

upon billow rushes towering over his soul, deep upon deep gapes to swallow him up. His breast is full to bursting, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth speaketh. And what do you think he spoke? "And about the ninth hour (three o'clock) Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew xxvii, 46.) He dares not say, my Father! he calls him his God, a disconsolate exclamation. True he calls him, my God. Every believer who has experienced something like it, knows what I say. God is the God of every creature; he is, and ever will be the God of fallen spirits — but alas! their angry, their offended God; and to say, my God, may be saying, my Judge, my devouring fire, my almighty enemy. Some have gone so far as to say that desertion of God was felt only in hell, and that therefore Christ must have experienced its torments then; but this is more than I find in the text. Some make his crucifixion and death, the desertion of our God; but this he knew before would come, and had long expected. It was the hiding of God's countenance, the utter absence of his presence, spiritual darkness and drought, accompanied as it always is by the fiery darts of the adversary hurled by torrents into the distressed soul. But what such darkness and separation from Heaven must have been to him who had always enjoyed the light of God's countenance, I do not presume to conjecture.

It does not, however, seem to have been necessary for our salvation, nor proper in the judgment of the Holy One, that his equally holy child Jesus should

remain long in this disconsolate condition. Soon the darkness passes; but only to render him sensible to another, and indeed to the most distressing natural inconvenience attending crucifixion—to *thirst*. Pain is conditioned upon the existence of nerves, and our hands and feet belong to those parts of our frame in which the greatest number of nerves converge. The wounds therefore inflicted upon the hands and feet of the man, who was crucified, soon excited a high and scorching wound-fever. It is peculiar to the wound-fever to break down effectually the spirit of man; and there is no hero known who, on being seized by it, did not become the most trembling coward, and take to the most precipitate flight, if he could. But the thirst of those condemned to crucifixion raged with a force quite peculiar to their state. The soldiers are now sitting and wondering at what they see and hear, and suggest to each other, whether he had not called the prophet Elijah, and whether Elijah would come and deliver him: for they, not understanding Hebrew, necessarily mistook the sense of our Lord's exclamation. Then "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." (John xix, 28.) The soldiers hearing this, one of them runs to a vessel filled with the most common wine, and putting a sponge upon the reed of a hissop, (which grows rather larger in Palestine than with us, and yields a feeble reed of two or three feet in length) he fills the sponge with wine and puts it to the mouth of Christ that he might suck it out. This wine is a different beverage from that which our Lord refused to take before his crucifixion, and contained

no myrrh. "When Jesus had received the vinegar, (i. e. the wine) he said, It is fulfilled. (John xix, 30.) Then crying out with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he bowed his head (John xix, 31) and gave up the ghost. (Luke xxiii, 46.) Then the earth was shaken, rocks in diverse places were rent, and graves opened, and the inner vail of the temple which separated the sanctuary from the holy of holies was torn in two pieces. The centurion and his band affrighted gave glory to God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man; truly this was the Son of God: and many of the people beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." (Luke xxiii, 48.)

"The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high-day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers and break the legs of the first and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they break not his legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record and his record is true, and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith: They shall look on him whom they have pierced." (John xix, 31—37.)

Thus died he who brought salvation to this perishing

world. He came poor, and poor he went out of this world; with wounds and stripes and with a wreath of thorns around his head. Extended on the cross he finished his course; but he left behind him the rich legacy of a boundless and eternal salvation to all who repent and believe. The reality of his death has been doubted by some; but by such men and upon such grounds, that we need not feel any concern on the subject. It rests with us on the sure foundation of the divine word; it was predicted by the prophets of old and by Christ himself; it was witnessed and attested by impartial and quite incredulous witnesses; it is either asserted or assumed in every book, and almost on every page of the New Testament; it was firmly maintained by the primitive Christians in the face of Jews and Heathen; it was silently though unwillingly acknowledged by the bitterest enemies of the truth. In addition to all this, however, when we shall come to the history of our Lord's resurrection, I shall bring forward such evidence as will show the inherent absurdity of every contrary hypothesis.

Various and delightful are the reflections and comforts which cluster around the cross of our Lord and Saviour. I will briefly indicate a few, and then close.

1. Many and great are our comforts on the bed of languor and death.

How enviable is our situation at the very time when stretched on a bed of anguish and death we think to be overwhelmed with sorrow, if we compare it but for a moment with the situation of Christ. Usually there is with us the comfortable room, there is the convenient bed, the soft pillow, the soothing medicine,

the refreshing drink. There is the careful wife, the anxious husband, the affectionate child, the experienced mother, the faithful friend, the able physician around our bed, taxing every power of invention to alleviate our sorrows;—as though the tears they hide, the sighs they suppress, as though the deep thrill of tenderest sympathy which animates every whisper of their voice were not already more precious, more stored with healing power than all the spices of India and the productions of European science; and often while a stranger and far from friends and kindred, a merciful Samaritan is led by and pours oil and wine into our wounds. If we choose to have it so, there is also the word of God, the voice of prayer, the consolations of the gospel, ministering spirits encircling our bed; the love of Jesus, the hope of Heaven through his blood. By a merciful dispensation, the distracted world then flees, our enemies are out of sight, the whole world seems to consist of a few loving friends, because no others approach our couch. True, here you see a Swartz, after near fifty years of faithful and hard missionary labor, dying with excruciating pain; there a Christian, like Thomas Scott, struggles for a hope of Heaven until his thickening blood already gathers around his heart and circulation begins to stop; in yonder hovcl you find stretched out in a corner on the ground, alone, unheeded, a Martyn, dying the death of the righteous. Often indeed it is true, what the prophet Isaiah testifieth, (lvii, 1, 2): “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, and no man considereth:”—but what follows, does also hold true :

“The righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace, and all who have walked in uprightness rest in their beds.” Either *external*, or *internal* comforts, but usually both, are administered to the suffering and dying believer. Jesus’s faithfulness and love will not let him expire in utter darkness and destitution; and never have I heard of that Christian who exclaimed like unto him: My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me? He may be tried hard; destitution without and within may oppress and afflict him; but a secret and faithful hand will bear him up, and bear him through, and before his soul leaves her tenement of clay, he will return answer to himself, saying: Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? *Hope thou in God*: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.”

But what shall I say, fellow Christians, of our fretfulness, our impatience on the bed of languor, our unmindfulness of our many comforts even then, and of the many services of love we are receiving, and of all of which our Lord was destitute? Ah, we had lost sight of Calvary then; and well may we hide our blushing countenances in the dust, as we look up to Him. Break it down, that wicked and unbroken spirit of self-will and fretfulness; break it down by the cross of Christ. It will not do for us to harbor that evil demon in our breasts after we have seen how Jesus suffered and died. O may death find us in the exercise of meek submission and with the sweet petition on our tongues, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.

2. Jesus can perfectly sympathise with us to our last expiring breath.

I have but little to say on this reflection. To *reason*, it seems that God must know our afflictions, and be able to sympathise with us without having himself the experience of them, and even to him who admits it on the authority of revelation that we did need such an high-priest, the idea has but little if any savor. Here distress and trouble, the sick bed, the dying bed must be the interpreters and the preachers of the word; and I can only say : remember this truth when you are drawing near unto death, and see whether it will not yield you comforts, whether it will hold out or not when all human consolations fail.

3. Sorrows and spiritual darkness, which sometimes attend the dying bed of a Christian, are no evidence either against the truth itself, or against his own Christian character; and the easy death of the infidel proves neither the truth of infidelity nor the goodness of his heart.

The impenitent criminal on the cross experienced no hidings of God's countenance, and not a word of concern or anxiety about the past or the future escapes his lips. Not even the dreadful torment of the cross could humble him sufficiently to make him refrain from sin and blasphemy, and probably he has never since stopped cursing and blaspheming. But the holy Saviour is full of distress, and anguish, and mourning. It is indeed the legitimate effect of "a good hope through grace" to sustain the sinking spirits when heart and flesh fail; and it is no more than natural, that the absorbing interest of earthly things should vanish and leave the soul empty and the bosom desolate when the honest hour of death draws near,

and eternity pours its peering light upon the titles, treasures and lusts of this perishing world. Moreover, we know that God is with his people in life and death, but that the hope of the hypocrite and the worldly man will perish when God taketh away the soul. Yet who can doubt, that deep-rooted self-righteousness, brute stupidity, or strong and refined stoicism may not cleave to the dying sinner until the light of eternity reveal to him his character, and the flames of hell his doom; while the trembling believer on closing his weeping eyes upon this world, may hear the unexpected invitation, Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! Let us not boast too much of the joyful death of many a pious soul, but rather be humbly grateful for it. It is a gift of God, which he may bestow or withhold. Let us rather see to it, all ye who hear me, that we breathe the spirit of Jesus now, and the abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our God will not fail us, whether our death be trying or triumphant.

4. We ought spiritually to die to the world and all its vanities.

Paul professes to be by the cross of Christ crucified to the world; i. e. as dead to its allurements as a crucified man would be,—and the world to be crucified unto him, i. e. utterly incapable of charming him any longer. (Galatians vi, 14,) — “They that are Christians have crucified their flesh with the sinful affections and lusts;” chapter v, 24.—i. e. they have broken down by the power of God their ruling influence over them. “I am crucified with Christ!”—he exclaims in another place; “nevertheless, I live, yet

not I, but Christ liveth in me;" chapter ii, 20. Similar sentiments are scattered over the pages of the bible everywhere. The death of Christ does not excuse us from dying to our lusts, but it renders this possible; it shows its propriety; it implies it; it recommends it; nay, it absolutely commands it, and with a voice, too, more powerful than the combined thunders of Sinai. To sin under the old dispensation was to transgress the law; to sin under the new, is to transgress the law, and to crucify the Son of God. He died *for* sin; we must *die to* sin. And blessed be God! now we can do it. The enemy is conquered; the new and living way is open; the vail of the holy of holies is torn asunder; our graves are open; Christ and his merits and his omnipotent Spirit are ours.

5. Once more. There is no rest, no peace of heart except under the cross, and in the cross.

There is no rest except *under* the cross. There is no satisfaction, no peace of mind to the expected, except *there*. I know on hearing this the worldling will point me to his diversion, and pleasure, the dirt in which he delights to wallow; the ambitious to his acquired or desired greatness, fame, titles, etc.; the avaricious to his yellow dust; the scholar to his rich and boundless field of literature and science. But I repeat it, there is no rest, no peace, no satisfaction, except under the cross of Christ. For there is in the human breast a set of slumbering wants which stretch themselves infinitely beyond all the boasted glories of this world, and leave stars, comets and galaxies at an interminable distance beneath their feet. There are eyes planted in the heart, which must be filled with

the glories of a world of spirit ~~of~~ and holiness, or they will forever grate upon their sockets and rouse insufferable anguish. There is a thirst, a hunger, lingering unheeded in the deep recesses of the spirit, which is not to be hushed forever into silence by the highway din of carnal desires and worldly dissipation, or drudgery, and which must be satisfied with the bread and water of life, or eternal starvation will inevitably follow.

There is no rest only *in* the cross; in the giving up of every wrong, self-seeking desire, of every idol, and darling sin within and without us. To be nothing in this world, to wish for nothing but Christ, to know nothing but Christ, to have nothing but him, — is perfect freedom, perfect health, eternal wealth, supreme wisdom, irresistible and holy power, transcending and real dignity, the satisfaction of every want, the filling up of the deep and vacant pit of all our spiritual desires, and endless rest.

MEDITATIONS.

VIII.

THE PENITENT THIEF ON THE CROSS.

LUKE XXIII. 39—43.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.

I SHALL endeavor at this time to make my hearers acquainted more than they have been hitherto, perhaps, with the poor, penitent thief on the cross. In any other place, this might indeed be an unpardonable offence against the rules of propriety; but in the house of God, where the etiquette of Heaven alone rules and dictates, not a *word*, even of apology, I trust, will be needed. In drawing his picture, I shall speak,

- I. Of his wicked life.
- II. Of his repentance.
- III. Of his faith, and
- IV. Of his ready acceptance with Christ.

I. *Of his wicked life.* "The way of the wicked is as darkness," saith Solomon, — dark in its beginning, darker in its progress, darkest in its catastrophe. Where the usual restraints are taken away, the way of the wicked man begins with the degrading service of those senses which he has in common with the brutes; then he goes on to a conscious violation of known and acknowledged obligations and moral precepts; then to a dull insensibility to them; then to an instinctive disinclination to them; then to a *deliberate hatred* against *him* who gave those precepts; then to open enmity towards those who obey them, and in fine, towards everything holy, just and good. The character itself is ever the same; but the degrees of development differ, gathering blackness as they approach the spirit of hell to which they are verging.

Thus the prodigal son of our text. He had wasted a life in the service of Satan. We meet him on his way to death, a disturber of public peace, a terror to the innocent, an abomination to the upright, at a heaven-wide distance from God and holiness, a despiser both of divine and of human laws, unworthy to live even in a world like this, where a thousand acts of wickedness may be perpetrated unpunished. And yet his language bears a close analogy to the language of the sacred Scriptures, of the Old Testament, and the best commentators agree that he was a Jew. Hence, it is

probable in the highest degree that he enjoyed early religious advantages. Faint recollections of divine truth seem to play around his memory; stifled feelings and half-effaced impressions of past times seem to be struggling now for that influence over his mind and heart, which they had so long and so unjustly been denied. How often may they have pleaded for that share of attention which they deserved, but in vain. Every good thought of that man had been crushed from his youth up; every religious privilege despised; every offer of mercy from within and from without neglected; God and his word set aside; his Sabbaths profaned; his people and his sanctuary carefully shunned, and bad company, profaneness, riot, and gambling preferred. Had the poor wandering youth pious parents? They are perhaps grieved to death. The tears and entreaties of his godly mother provoked but his impatience; the remonstrances of his father, his indignation; the rebukes, yea, the very presence of pious people, his hatred; public laws, his revenge; the laws of God, his blasphemies. He began, like all the rest of forlorn wretches, with sins of the heart; then came unrestrained language; then the so called small deviations of youth; until driven from society he plunged himself into that whirlpool of crimes where man becomes the proper bond-slave of Satan and a curse and terror to his fellow-men.

This indeed is substantially the history of thousands of every sex, age, rank and description, whose dying beds the minister of Christ has to attend. In the silent hour of midnight, perhaps, he is called. With hasty steps he proceeds to the solemn place marked by the

solitary night-lamp, where an immortal being is about to change worlds. And what is the scene he meets? There lies a poor, distressed sinner, ready to breathe his last. His physicians have given him up; his gay friends have taken their leave, and shun his sick-bed like death — a few hirelings excepted, who hope to be his heirs; the card-table, the drinking-table are upset; the candles of the ball-room are quenched; and the viol, the timbrel, and the harp of his riotous feasts are silent forever; the busy world has forgotten him; life has lost its deceitful charms, its usurped importance; eternity draws near. His early lot God had caused to fall in pleasant places, intending to give him a goodly heritage in his kingdom hereafter. Pious parents, good society, the privileges of the sanctuary, the word of God, many a faithful admonition of conscience, in short, a thousand calls from Heaven marked his youthful days. But the world called on the other side and promised, what it is neither able nor willing to give, happiness, greatness, satisfaction. The sensual youth doubted, listened, endeavored the impossible and absurd task of serving two masters; he *cannot* bear to give up the world all at once, as the Bible requires it; he wants to enjoy himself a little while; he is caught. His thoughtfulness, if any he had, wears out; his strength to resist the evil one fails; nay, he begins to like his baits; doubts respecting the reality of religion fill his mind; the darkness of the sacred Scriptures, the imperfection of pious people, the pressure of business, and ten thousand other lying refuges are resorted to; the world gathers numberless and resistless charms; the tempter doubles his offers, and the deluded sinner

strikes hands, and bidding deliberately farewell to Christ and his cross, he follows on straightway as an ox goeth to the slaughter; he serves the flesh, the world, and the devil. Awhile he feels himself great and happy; his course, especially when compared with that of the humble and despised Jesus and his followers, seems to be an honorable, interesting and delightful one; until God lays his hand upon him; until sickness, death, the grave, eternity, judgment, and endless retribution stare into his face. But then, O then! — his greatness, his riches, his learning, his pleasures, his dissipations, his idle schemes and plans for many days to come — all are vanished like a morning dream, like smoke. Now he wants to repent. He sends for ministers, he looks for his Bible, he wants to hear the voice of prayer. He wants to be saved. But it is vain, too late — too late. The spark of a better conscience is effectually and forever quenched; the irrevocable sentence of reprobation is past in the court of Heaven, and sealed with the seal of eternity; like Esau he seeks repentance and finds none. Despair strangles him on his pillow, and malicious spirits from beneath goad his mad and raving soul down to hell, where their worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched. A few moments he was glittering with delusive brightness on the firmament of polished society; now he goes down like a wandering star to the blackness of darkness forever, and no minister, no Bible, no prayer, no sacrament can save him from eternal ruin!

This is the lot of thousands, and tens of thousands; but, thanks be to God for his sovereign power and

grace in Jesus Christ, it is not the lot of all. Saul sins, and dies without repentance; David sins too, but sues for pardon and receives it. Ahab serves Baalim and dies without repentance; Manasseh serves them too, but repents and is forgiven. Among soldiers, we meet with the centurion and with Cornelius, among publicans with Matthew and Zacheus, among the Pharisees with Nicodemus, among magistrates with Joseph of Arimathaea, among dissolute women with the woman "which was a sinner," but unto whom much was forgiven because she loved much; among those who deny the Lord that bought them, we meet with Peter; among the persecutors of the people of God, with Paul; among thieves and murderers, with the penitent thief on the cross. O for eyes to behold the innumerable host of poor, but forgiven sinners around mount Zion above! Numbers without number uttering joy, gratitude and everlasting praise! But could we see them, and hear their holy song, the eye of *our* penitent sinner would burn with no inferior flame, and his voice would not be found the lightest in the harmony of Heaven.

II. *Of his repentance.* What his state of mind was while he was imprisoned and on his way to the place of execution, we are not told. But while it is quite probable that he was not altogether thoughtless, it is certain too, that he had no adequate conception of his guilt and danger. Had he known himself, his eyes would have been opened to see and to know his Saviour also walking near him, bearing the sins of the world; and he would not have deferred securing his own

salvation, to near the last minute of his life. But the poor man was ignorant of his own condition, and how could he know him who reveals himself only to the broken and contrite in heart. So blinded are we by nature, that the most heinous crimes committed by us cannot truly impress us with our state of guilt and condemnation before God. And this is the chief reason why Christ remains unknown to most even of those in whose ears his name is ringing every day. Let us pray for a knowledge of ourselves, and the knowledge of Christ will follow soon and certainly enough.

Our melancholy procession has arrived at the place of execution, the crosses are raised and fixed in the ground; the victims are fastened to them, Christ in the middle as the chief criminal. Now a horrible scene begins, at which Heaven wept, and the powers of darkness shouted for joy. The pharisees, the high priests and the people begin to mock and curse Christ, the poor defenceless victim of their rage. They challenge him to come down from the cross, and laugh him to scorn that he had saved so many others, and was unable (as they thought) to save himself. The two murderers remained unabused, you observe, for the world loveth her own, in a measure, even to the end. Christ makes no reply, shows no resentment, no feeling moves his breast, except that of pity; no words came from his lips, except those of prayer and intercession for his infuriated murderers. This may have been the first moment, when a saving ray of heavenly light fell into the heart of our penitent thief. For thus it happened afterwards, when Christians were suffering and dying on the stake without a murmur and without resentment,

may, with prayer for their tyrants and with praises to God, that the eyes of thoughtless and stupid beholders were opened, their minds enlightened, their hearts renewed and their souls saved.

The other thief, hardened in sin and given over, now begins to rave. He has inferred from the mockeries of the Jews, that the man of the middle cross must be that famous Rabbi, who had done so many great and wonderful works, and whom many believed to be the Messiah; and he doubtless expected that if this was the case, he would forthwith show his power, descend from his cross, deliver his fellow sufferers also, and make havoc of his enemies. But he waits in vain. Christ makes no reply, no effort to descend, but evidently prepares for death. Disappointment, contempt and anger now take the place of a carnal hope, and fill the heart of the miserable man; and he pours out the whole torrent of his rage upon the suffering, and praying, and dying Jesus. Thus Herod and Pilate make friendship, and high priests and murderers join harmoniously as soon as Christ or his people are to be persecuted and slain. He that is not *for* Christ, is *against* him, and he who does not *gather* with him, *scattereth*.

Christ is silent still, and hides not his face from reproach and cursing. The penitent thief on the other side looks on, and wonders, and admires the scene. The moment of mercy has come; the blasphemies of his fellow criminal and of the Jews make him shudder; God opens his eyes; he sees the guilt of these men and his own guilt in all its length and breadth. Our guilt and our need are one. He who feels his guilt, feels his

need, and he who feels his need will naturally seek relief; and he that seeketh, says Christ, findeth. The heart of the poor man breaks; he can bear the sight no longer. He rebukes his companion in sin; and before God and all the world he confesses his own guilt and shame. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for *we* receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss."

To justify God and to condemn ourselves, these are inseparable and true characteristics of genuine repentance. Self-condemnation, — not the external, hypocritical, partial one committed to memory like the *ABC*: but heartfelt, sincere, sweeping, carrying away from us every appearance of worthiness and claim before God, — is a dagger to the heart of the "old man." For when our claims upon divine favor are all clean gone, then it is plain there remains no other alternative to us than to lay down our arms and to surrender unconditionally to the sovereign pleasure of God. But to trust himself to his God without reserve, and without selfish bargains, is not in the heart of man. Hence the awful shrinking of sinners, when convinced of their guilt. Free and sovereign grace is an element, in which sinful nature and the carnal heart of man must expire without remedy. And therefore even thieves and murderers in prison and on the scaffold will cleave to the goodness of their own characters with stubborn tenacity, unaccountable and ridiculous as the fact may appear to us. But what shall they do? Such unconditional surrender to God, — ah! it is like the giving up of the ghost. To subscribe to the unqualified accu-

sation of unmingled and sweeping guilt, to strike ourselves the death-blow to our own characters before God, to knock away all the rotten props around about which supported us, and relinquishing the frail bottom of chaff and sand on which our house stood, to leap out of our element, and to throw ourselves into the mysterious deeps of divine sovereignty and divine mercy, with nothing in our hands, but a poor, short word of promise,—oh! our very soul shudders at the thought, and “chooses strangling rather than life” on these terms, and hell itself has no more terrors to human nature than this tremendous attempt. And from this point, indeed, it is that the greatest number of thoughtful and inquiring men turn back and perish forever. And yet, it is and forever remains the indispensable condition of pardoned sin and eternal life.

III. *His faith.*—The mind of this man is no sooner settled on the subject of “repentance toward God,” than “faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” rises into existence. This is the proper divine order, which men may not invert or destroy. “Repent and believe!” is the message of God to fallen man. Some mean to believe without repentance, but they will find themselves mistaken. Faith without previous repentance is a dead thought, a mere notion, a doctrine admitted either with or without evidence, a weak, second-handed conviction. Reasoning at the best built it up; reasoning may pluck it down again. It leaves the mind unenlightened, the heart untouched, unpurified, the life unaltered, the soul under condemnation of death. Faith after true repentance is a conviction resting on

experience and intuitive evidence, a truth of the first order, it is the substance of things hoped for and the unshaken evidence of things unseen by carnal eyes. It carries reason and logic headlong; it quickens and renews the heart, enlightens the mind, influences the life, overcomes the world, and lays hold on things heavenly and eternal.

So was the faith of our penitent sinner: "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Lord? What does he mean? The poor, condemned, executed Jew, a lord? Certainly, he is none of the lords of *this* world, this is plain; and he never had been one of their number. He was of humble origin and from the most despised city of Judea. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" Into what kingdom? Certainly into no kingdom of this world. For if really birth had given him a claim upon all the thrones on earth, the hope of inheriting them and of distributing their offices to his favorites, was forever past. "Lord, remember *me!*" Whom? Him he was to remember, who was ready himself to expire, and who could deserve no benefit from any earthly protection. No. To our penitent malefactor the world with its prospects was blasted, and its attractions dead forever. The eye of his faith was directed to another world; his affections were settling on things above. He calls Christ "Lord" in a spiritual sense, a Lord in the world to come, who had a spiritual and everlasting kingdom to expect, and to distribute, and whose mere remembrance of him would be sufficient to secure his eternal interests. But who is Lord and King in Heaven save the Lord of lords and the King of

kings? Who has power to distribute the blessings of the world to come to whomsoever he pleases, but he "who doeth his pleasure in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and to whom no man may say, what doest thou?" This confession, therefore, amounts to the solemn and comprehensive declaration, thou art the Son of God, the Messiah, the Word, which was in the beginning with God and which was God, the maker and ruler of the universe, the sovereign disposer of the inheritance of the saints in light, the Saviour of the world, who can and will save freely and to the uttermost all who come unto him.

But how does he come by this faith in circumstances so unspeakably unfavorable, so decidedly opposed to it? The condemned, expiring man on yonder cross the Lord of Heaven? A stumbling-block of mountain size to the Jews, and the very height of foolishness to the Greeks. His was a giant stretch of faith, I confess. In respect to external support, it outstrips the faith of all the apostles, the centurion, the distressed fathers and mothers, the blind, the deaf, the lepers, the paralytics; the faith of all martyrs on the stake, in the flames, in persecution, in caves and dens of the earth. It was pure faith, clean and free from every support from without, a work of the Holy Spirit unalloyed by any earthly ingredient. Peter walked on the sea, but he saw Christ pacing with firm steps over the rolling wave; the apostles remained faithful to their conviction, but they had witnessed ten thousand exhibitions of Christ's divine power, and had seen him and conversed with him for three years. The sick and the distressed came to him from far, but the land was full

of his fame; the saints in after times sacrificed their lives for him, but they had accumulating proofs of his all-ouerruling sceptre, daily adding strength (if this be possible) to the testimony of the sacred records. And what is it for us *now* to believe on him, when the cloud of witnesses and the mass of evidence in his favor have already become so boundless that it requires almost a life to pass over and duly estimate the whole of it? It is all comparatively nothing. Our faith is sight, and wo unto that man who can at the present day live and die without being a Christian from his heart! Sodom and Gomorrah, Bethsaida, Chorazin, and Capernaum, the scoffing Jews, the dying *impenitent* rebel of our text, will condemn him in the Judgment day.

But let us look up to Calvary again. Here is a faith firm and clear. Not like the faith of many a professor of religion, an *ignis fatuus*, sprung from mud, and lost and straying until it is quenched in endless night; but bright and sure like the polar star. Not like the dim, unsteady night-lamps in the dismal cave of human speculation, suspended on a rolling cord, or a rusting wire; but like the noon-day sun in his strength, supported by the invisible power of Heaven, rejoicing like a strong man to run a race, equally unchecked in his progress by the small pebble on the sea-shore, and by the heaven-towering mountains of the western world, triumphing over obstacles from every quarter, and cleaving to the divine Saviour of the world when believers doubted and despaired, and apostles fled in confusion; when angels in heaven stopped their harps in awful suspense as to what was coming, and the powers of darkness shouted victory and triumph.

“Lord, remember me!” It was a faith working *an entire and unconditional surrender to Christ*. There is no choosing, no self-will, no undue aspiration, no desire to obtain even a pledge. Remember me; this is enough. Do as thou wilt with me, only remember me. “Lord, remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom.” This is no carnal faith, no selfish prayer. The impenitent thief on the other side wished to be remembered too; but in this world, and to be delivered from the agonies of the cross. This man is willing to suffer here, if he can live in the remembrance of Christ in heaven. This is the true distinction between the believer and the unbeliever, and their prayers. The one wishes to be delivered from pain, the other from sin; the one seeks the world, the other heaven.

But you ask again, How did he attain to this precious faith? I answer, the Holy Spirit wrought it in him. On natural principles it cannot be accounted for. But you, who know the Lord, why do you ask this question? You know that there is such a thing as divine illumination. Do you not remember the time, when a light seemed to be poured all at once over the word of God; a light, which seemed to quicken every letter, and light up ten thousand stars on every page? when divine subjects, which used to be dark and confounded in your minds, appeared to you in a harmony never before seen, and with the charms of divine symmetry chained your astonished and enchanted hearts and looks? when a passage of the divine word, which aforesaid seemed hardly to furnish matter for five minutes’ reflection, expanded in every direction like the blue sky, till you could pursue it no longer?

when a promise seemingly of little meaning and little value, became to you an inexhaustible source of consolation, a sure support in distress, a shield against the fiery darts of the adversary, and a flaming sword with which you could chase a thousand evil spirits from your heart? Surely ye do remember the time.

Well, here is the same effect produced by the same cause. Our dying penitent had heard of the woman's seed who should bruise the serpent's head, yet so as to have his heel bruised first. Or he remembered the 22d or the 69th Psalm, or the 53d chapter of Isaiah, or some other similar portion of holy writ. It had been sleeping in his mind, having no sense, no interest, no form nor comeliness. But behold, his eyes are now opened by the Holy Spirit. Heavenly light glows and blazes behind the dark transparency. All is plain, all beautiful, interesting, lovely, irresistibly attractive. The godly, patient sufferer on yonder accursed tree, is the brazen serpent raised by Moses, that all who behold it might be saved. The whole dark, unintelligible dispensation of baptisms and divers washings, of sacrifices and shedding of blood which could not take away sin, — O! what a striking symbol of the sacrifice of the Son of God! Moses' mediation and prophetic character, Melchisedeck's and Aaron's priestly offices, David's and Solomon's reigns — how fit to shadow forth the new dispensation which was just commencing! "Cursed is every one," says the law, "that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" and again it says, "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Jesus

of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the Saviour of all men, the Lord of Heaven. "Lord, remember me!" Blessed consequences of early religious instruction! Unhappy those who are deprived of them by the cunning craftiness or the infidelity of wicked men; thrice unhappy those who neglect them wilfully and thus shut themselves out from their last ray of hope.

IV. *His ready acceptance of Christ.*—The short petition is no sooner uttered, when the answer is ready. "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shall thou be with me in paradise" Ten thousand talents was the sinner of our text owing to his Lord, and he forgave him freely. He was a murderer, nay, *his* murderer, as indeed we all are, but his guilt is not so much as noticed with a word. He comes with his mountain-load of crimes, and he is received, without rebuke, without a reprov- ing look, without a moment's hesitation, and he receives his title to heaven without money, and without price. He comes without long preparations of self-mortification, without that self-righteous routine invented by men; he comes as he is, poor, blind, naked, in want of all things, and is received with open arms; he comes in the last hour of his life and finds the heart of Christ and the gates of heaven wide open. There is one condition, and but one, "Come!"

But is not this a dangerous doctrine? Will not men on that account persevere in sin? What if they did? I am bound to preach the gospel as it is; but I am not responsible for the abuse which wicked men.

may make of it. Yet if there be here one who means to go to Calvary in order to get confirmed in sin, be it so! Let him go there, and mark well every feature of the affecting scene on that sacred spot. And if the dying Saviour cannot impress him with the holiness of God, the sacredness of his law, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; if he can trample upon dying love with true infernal contempt; if the narrow, hair-breadth escape of the repenting criminal cannot make him shudder, nor frighten him from his evil way: then let him turn his eyes to the other side, and on the third cross he will see a man of fearful likeness to himself, a standing, warning monument for impious, daring sinners like him; a dying impenitent monster, mocking his Saviour, and cursing his God and his King with his last breath. That is the cross which God caused to be erected for him who dares abuse the death of Christ; on that let him look, until his flinty heart is melted with godly fear and his very soul filled with awe. Then he will be prepared to forfeit by the example of penitence and faith, which we have contemplated to-day and to follow it; to embrace the cross of Christ with tears of sorrow and love, and to exclaim, believing, "Lord, remember me!"

But our time has expired. Our scene draws near to its close. Christ's work on earth is done, his eyes are closed, his limbs cold, his soul has taken her flight. The bones of the two malefactors are broken, the one is gone to follow his Saviour and to proclaim his love to the unnumbered hosts of heaven, and the other is gone — to his own place.

Now for a glance at that precious scene, when Christ entered into the gates of life with the first fruit of his sufferings and to witness the welcome they received. But this must be reserved for another world. If we too repent and believe, we shall soon see this and all the other glories of heaven, as we are seen, and know them as we are known.

MEDITATIONS.

IX.

THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW XXVII. 57—61.

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus's disciple: he went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

(Compare Mark xv. 42—47; Luke xxiii. 50—56; John xix. 38—42.)

I. “And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.” (Luke xxiii, 44—46.) About three o'clock in the afternoon—a significant, mysterious hour—the daily evening sacrifice used to be offered up before

the tabernacle of Jehovah in the wilderness; about three o'clock the Paschal lamb used to be slain; about three o'clock the great alarming sacrifice for our sins was made by the death of Jesus Christ; and the true Paschal lamb thus prepared for all who long to leave the Egyptian darkness of human reason and the Egyptian slavery of sin and of human works for salvation, that they may go out into the light and liberty of the children of God. The great work was done. After three o'clock, the miraculous darkness which had commenced at noon passed away from the face of the earth. The soldiers hastened to return to their abode and the Jews to finish their preparations for the Passover. Jesus was dead, the battle was fought, the victory won. Their rage was spent, though not their malice. They left the body of Christ, either to the impure hands of the soldiery, intending that it should rot unburied according to the Roman usage, or what is more likely, they committed it to some servants to throw it with the bodies of the other malefactors into a hole dug in some impure place, that the law (Deuteronomy xxi, 23) might not be broken. And here a difficult passage in Isaiah liii. receives light and its true construction, which our English version does not exhibit. In the 9th verse of that chapter, it is said, "And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Here the most common reader is likely to be struck with the thought, that Christ, the subject of the verse and chapter in question, did not make his grave with the wicked, nor was he with the

rich in his death. Rather contrariwise. He was in his death with the wicked, and made his grave with the rich, or better, a rich one. But a true and accurate translation of the passage, which is supported by the strongest arguments, even aside from the fulfilment, would run thus: "They gave (appointed or ordered) his grave with the wicked ones (plur.), and with a rich one (sing.) he was in (or after) his death (or deaths): though he had done no violence, neither had been deceit in his mouth."

Thus this remarkable prediction has found its accurate fulfilment, and the hand of Providence is clearly discernible in the whole transaction of the burial of Christ. Though he had done no wrong, and no sinful word had ever been uttered by him; his relentless enemies destroyed him, and intended to abuse even his dead body by giving it an ignominious burial among out-laws, and perhaps even among the carcasses of brutes. But when the great object of Christ's death was attained, and the debt of the world paid, God interposed, and his beloved and innocent Son was honored with a distinguished burial, and a clean and honorable sepulchre; and a sepulchre, too, which was fitted to answer some other purposes of the highest importance, as the history of our Lord's resurrection shows.

Thus does our heavenly Father know how to preserve from undeserved shame and blame those that are his. They are the apple of his eye, and their character is as dear and sacred to him, as *his* character is to *them*; he will save it at last, by the right hand of his omnipotence; and those who trust in him shall never be confounded. It is both the characteristic and the

privilege of the true Christian, to seek the glory and the interests of God and of his kingdom, and to seek nothing else; and to leave his own character, and his own interests, however pure and sacred they may be, with him whose all-seeing eye follows him at every step, and whose unalterable character and promises are the unfailing guarantee that truth and innocence will conquer at last. O what a mean pursuit, what a desperate undertaking to seek one's own honor and advantage! To seek advantage and honor on an arena where we meet with competitors without number, with a few stoics, it may be, as supercilious spectators, and with every wild beast and every subtle serpent in human shape, as the arbiters of the contest. Where all are contending for all, each craving everything, will you dream of getting it? It is like seeking food in the lion's den; the moment you seize hold of it, the monster will tear you to pieces. And what if you should get it, what will it be? The only way to find and secure our interests, is to promote the interests of God and his cause; the only path to true honor, is to seek the honor of God; the only way to preserve our characters unsoiled, is to do and suffer the will of our Father, and to commend our cause to him.

I do not intend to say that we must always keep silence at the calumnies of the wicked. The good of our fellow-men, and the prosperity of the cause of Christ are often identified with our characters. Whenever this is the case, we are not the only sufferers, not perhaps the chief sufferers under the attacks of the enemies of truth and innocence; and in opposing truth to falsehood, and correcting meekly the wrong impres-

sions which the slanderer may have made upon uninformed and unsuspecting men, we do not defend ourselves, but those who suffer with, or by us, or for our sakes. Indeed, the true Christian suffers not at all when he is calumniated, despised and cast out as vile, either by the world, or by mistaken and prejudiced Christians. He has no character to save before the world; he has no interests to secure on earth; and his character before God and his interests in Heaven, what man on earth, what evil spirit in hell, yea I say boldly, what angel in heaven will ever be able to touch or injure that? Rob him, beat him, revile him, kill him, — or if you please, honor him, enrich him, praise him, worship him, — it is all one thing to him. You can make him neither poor nor rich, neither happy nor wretched; and if he has any choice, he will for his own safety choose poverty rather than wealth, and neglect rather than honor: lest he should forget his heavenly inheritance and call, and become unlike to his Lord. He knows that his Redeemer liveth, and the triumphant song, “O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?” is his crown, his kingdom, his boast, his source of ever-flowing comfort and delight. Who will harm him? What has *he* to gain, yet, who has gained heaven? What has he to fear who knows it is impossible he should lose heaven? Nothing, absolutely nothing! Ten thousand worlds of enraged devils will gnash their teeth at him in vain; for God is his portion forever. Only *then*, when others would suffer on his account he will open his mouth while there is hope that it may do good. So did Christ defend his own character against the Jews time and

again. So did Paul speak "foolishly" to the Corinthians, lest his apostolic character should suffer, and millions in every age should lose the benefit of his inspired writings, and perish. So did Swartz defend his own innocence, lest the hand of Christian benevolence should be withdrawn from perishing Hindoostan. So, a few years ago, did a good and humble Christian, in a superstitious and despotic country on this continent, expose vile slanderers by telling his plain story, lest many of his innocent friends should be crushed under the heel of an unrighteous and mighty inquisition. Then, and only then, the Christian will speak and act, seemingly for himself and unwillingly too, to save others from harm. But where he stands alone with his interests and character as a Christian, he will suffer, and his meekness will prove an irresistible weapon and a wall not to be scaled; his cause will triumph, and heaven shall know, and often the world, too, that he is beloved of God and the heir of unfading glory. What will you do with a man who, commending his cause to God, defends himself no more? Will you attack him? So you may. And so may any wild beast. In so doing you can only disgrace and injure yourself, and at last God will arise in his behalf, save and honor him, and cover you with well-deserved reproach and shame.

Thus it came to pass here even in the mere externals of the burial of Christ. The innocent and defenceless Lamb of God, now slain by wicked hands, and cold, was to be buried with the burial of a thief, or a brute, and vile hirelings were already preparing to do their accursed work — when God appeared. For —

II. "When the evening was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph." (Matthew.) Mark calls him "an honorable counsellor, i. e. a counsellor of the Sanhedrim, who also waited for a kingdom of God; Matthew, "a disciple of Jesus;" John, "a secret disciple for fear of the Jews;" and Luke calls him "a good man and a just," who had not consented to the counsel and deed of the Jews in the murder of Christ. He went in to Pilate, and did, — what was indeed often done by the relatives of a criminal, but was highly unpopular and perilous for him in this instance — he begged for the body of Jesus. "Boldly" he went in, says Mark, not intending to indicate thereby the manner in which Joseph petitioned, but the peril he encountered by doing so; as if we should say, he *ventured* in, he *dared* to ask for the body of Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his relatives had a *natural* right to claim his dead body; John was a favorite and a relative to the high priest; many wealthy and influential individuals of either sex, who were favorable to our Lord, were in Jerusalem at this time; the fact of his having been crucified was now known throughout the whole city, and the burial — they knew what it would be. But so great was the terror struck into all the friends of Christ, such was the danger of the undertaking to rescue even his dead body, and so small the prospect of success, that none of them all seemed to rise to the conception of approaching Pilate with a request to this effect. Joseph ventured in. And what pious heart that saw him draw near to the governor's palace, knock at the massy gate, and enter in, would not have wished him God speed, and send

up to Heaven the ardent petition that God might give him "mouth and utterance" and crown him with success! And with success he was crowned. "Pilate commanded the body to be delivered," and Joseph proceeded with happy steps to Calvary, to attend to the melancholy duty before the sun should set.

Joseph is an example of piety at court, and of friendship and faithfulness in distress. A *councillor of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, at the time of Christ* — what situation could there be more unfavorable to godliness than his? His lot had fallen into evil days. The powerful influence of a corrupt generation, and a selfish and reprobated clan of priests was naturally carrying him down to ruin. What dangers were clustering around piety with him! He was rich. He was honorable, or respected. He held an office. He had much of this world's good things to lose; and what more effectual way to injury and loss could he pursue than that of professing an attachment to the hated Jesus, who now hung lifeless on the accursed tree? He take down from the cross the Nazarene and bury him in his own grave — how could he ever take his seat again in the stately Sanhedrim! How lift up his blushing countenance before the highpriest and his father-in-law! What could he answer to the pointed and malicious remarks which would meet him in every circle of the great and the rich at Jerusalem! How must his family have been ashamed of the degrading act! The very boys in the street would hardly fail to point at him as he passed, and to whisper in his hearing, Nazarene, Galileean! At the court of Herod, too, his influence was now gone; and what idea could

the Roman governor henceforth have of a man, who, with all his advantages and opportunities for intellectual improvement, turned out to be the most devoted of all the deluded simple devotees of the fanciful and eccentric young Rabbi of Nazareth, who had just been crucified? These and a hundred other considerations, however, did not shake the mind of Joseph. He had independence enough to be what he was. But he had none of the bravery, which is so high in the market among the young, the bright, the rich, the literary of our refined and civilized age — the bravery to oppose God and despise Christ. Yet had he a kind of courage which they in their turn have not; that of braving the great world, of encountering the loss of wealth and honor, and of following conscience and good sense. He may have lacked the refinement and the reading of many a courtier of Herod; but he knew what they knew not; he knew how to think, reflect, feel, pray, choose, act, and *suffer* if necessary, for righteousness' sake. He was no mathematician, no eclectic philosopher, like Pilate; but he was, what Pilate was not, the friend and benefactor of innocence at the gallows.

It is a vain excuse of many among the great, and one by which they pay no compliment to their own principles and character, that their situation does not permit them to be pious. Indeed! If this be true, then be a man, and leave your iniquitous employment which keeps you from serving God. Draw out the serpent from your bosom! Spit out the poison from your mouth! Crush the spark of perdition that has settled in the folds of your garment! Your

situation does not permit you to be pious! A fine excuse! It will answer for every thief and highway robber, for every profane stage actor, and every harlot about town. Their situation, too, will not permit them to serve God. But mark it, your excuse is a vain one. You cannot serve God, because you are rich, because you have an office, because you are at court, because you are in the army. Moses was even brought up at the court of Egypt; Obadiah was the first man at Ahab's court; Daniel was a Babylonian prince; David, Josiah, and others, were kings; the centurion in the gospel and Cornelius were officers of a heathen army; Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man and an honorable councillor. But they were all pious men, and knew how to serve God in the situation in which they were.

But I cannot dismiss this part of our meditation without one glance at least into heaven, to consider with what joy and humble gratitude the heart of Joseph must have been filled, when, arriving at the court above, he saw to whom he had ministered at that gloomy and distressful day, when both the malice and the darkness of the pit seemed to be poured upon Jerusalem. Then he thought he served a holy, innocent man, — afterwards faith taught him to whom he had ministered, — but now he *saw*, and behold he was “the Word made flesh.” He was burying a suffering brother, he thought; and behold, he sees him now at the right hand of God, having an everlasting kingdom, and being surrounded with the worshipping hosts of heaven! And what a source of rejoicing must it be to him now! What in a hundred, in a thousand, in millions of years! What throughout eternity! Well

might a holy envy kindle up in our hearts, that *we* did not live then, to bury Christ or to do some small service towards it. All these opportunities to serve Christ while he was on earth seem now to be so many blessed monopolies, the privileges of a few favored ones, and we could almost sit down and weep that we live at the melancholy distance of eighteen centuries from that bright spot in the history of our planet, when the Lord of glory paid his *incognito* visit to it, and received a few services ignorantly done to him by a few good people. But, my friends, weep not. Let not envy tempt you. There is no occasion for it. Do you want to serve Christ? You can do this now. Serve him in the temple of your mind. And if particular external services may yield you any special comfort, behold, here are the members of his body, his children, his beloved ones: what you do to the least of them, you do to him, he has said. Behold, here is a world of perishing souls, purchased by his blood. Lead them to him, and it will be a more important and welcome service to him, than if you buried him in a tomb hewn in one solid diamond.

III. We now meet with another good man: “and there came also Nicodemus, who at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about an hundred pound weight.” (John.) What myrrh is, we all know. The aloes are not the plant of that name, from which we obtain a bitter juice, but an aromatic tree, the wood of which was used (probably reduced to powder) on occasions like ours. An hundred pounds are none too much, as many have thought; for such substances were

consumed almost to any extent, according to the ability of the family. At Herod's burial, five hundred servants bearing ointments walked in the train, as Josephus relates. Part of the aloe wood was probably intended to be burned in the tomb, to produce its odor.

Nicodemus must have been where he observed the whole train of events on that day, else he could not have been present at the fleeting, hurried moment when Joseph was burying our Lord. But more. If he did not enter into a common plan with Joseph to share in that work of love, he must have watched him, as he went from Calvary to the governor's house. For how could he have had his myrrh and aloes ready otherwise? Such things were not kept in the dispensaries of families in such quantities, but needed to be purchased from the druggist. At all events, he must have been ready, as soon as Pilate's permission to bury Christ was obtained, to set out for the purchase; and while Joseph of Arimathea, John and the three women who persevered with the Lord, took him down from the cross, to carry him to his tomb, Nicodemus must have made the purchase and met them in the garden of Joseph. They must have known, too, that he would come; for they themselves procured nothing of this kind, evidently relying on him. A lovely band of pious souls of very different callings and habits; but united by the bond of perfectness — that bond which is strongest in distress — and engaged with one heart and mind in the service of their common Lord.

John iii: Nicodemus comes to Christ by night from fear of the Jews, and finds it very hard to understand

the great doctrine of regeneration. Chapter vii: he is present at a furious meeting of the Sanhedrim, ventures a trembling remark against their unlawful proceedings in reference to Christ, and is so put down and silenced, that we really are led to fear he will never open his mouth again. And, behold, here we meet him all at once among the most faithful, liberal and persevering friends of Christ.

There is not a more lovely example than this of the power of God "made perfect in meekness." Poor Nicodemus, how full he was by nature of unbelieving fears! All the time of our Lord's ministry he durst not come out boldly and openly. O the high priest, and his sacred office, and his mighty family! O the formidable army of the Sanhedrim! O the popular pharisees and scribes! O the synagogue, the excommunication! O the scoffing world! and perhaps even, my brothers, my sisters, yea, my wife, my children. What black clouds, big with destruction; what insurmountable barriers to open piety, to that unpopular outcast profession, which is the only one that makes men miserable in this world! How he would have loved to hear Christ! But, to go with those who went to mock and to dispute, his heart did not permit him. And to mingle with the pious, to hear Jesus preach and teach, and to look devotional and serious as indeed he was, — why, he would have sunk into the ground, if old Annas or Caiaphas had ever charged him with this high treason against the synagogue. One dark night, late, he wraps his face into his cloak to visit that lovely, attractive young Rabbi, who seemed to turn the world upside down. Nobody was to know

it, and who can tell what white lie the poor man may have told, as he slipt down stairs or out of his house, when his unbelieving wife or children asked him where he was going so late and in such darkness without a lantern; for you may depend upon it, he took none with him. In the young Rabbi's chamber he heard strange things of a new birth, a spiritual birth, a spiritual kingdom, and a hundred other things equally mysterious and interesting. O how he abhorred now the childish, crazy casuistry of their corrupt traditions. Here is religion, here is eternal life, if anywhere, he thought. Here let me build a tabernacle. But no; he must go home. And there, alas! he meets again his scolding wife, his distracted son, his worldly-minded daughter, his thoughtless relatives. In the morning he is perhaps called to the high-priest and received with great cordiality and paternal affection; he hears one bad story after another about Christ; on the table lies written upon parchment, in broad characters, the awful curse upon every one who should profess Christ to be the Messiah. A resistless tide carries him down again into doubt, fear, unbelief and weakness. Once more, when he is an eye and ear witness of the iniquitous, lawless spirit of the Sanhedrim, he rises and speaks a word, but alas! a flood of contumelies and menaces overwhelms him and sweeps away all his courage. But when all his own courage was swept away, then came that courage which is from above. When his own strength was all spent, then the power of God was made perfect in him.

Nor is this strange. The work of God in us begins where ours ceases. "When I am weak, then am I

strong," says Paul, and if there be anything paradoxical to reason, it is this saying. But in the spiritual life of the Christian, it has its root struck through and through, and its most profound and important meaning. While we are strong in ourselves, there is no hope for us. But when the lamentation, "Lord save us, or we perish!" bursts out from our distressed and melting hearts, then the day begins to dawn. Why, the very seeds must rot before they can bud; and intellectually even a man must absolutely feel his need of instruction, before he can receive any to purpose. And it is a fact, God despises all human strength and will not have it. Therefore he breaks the bones of the lion and flings him aside into the field to rot, and then, after a little while, meat comes forth from the eater, and sweetness from the strong.

Rejoice, therefore, ye weak ones! You are the vessels of divine grace, and the instruments of God. If any mountains are to be removed, you will remove them; if any Goliath is to be slain, he shall fall by your hands. Yea, more. The hands of the strong ones shall droop nerveless, and they themselves shall sink and perish; but *your* weak hand shall renew their strength and hold on to the cross through life and death, till you awake in the bosom of your Saviour. O that we had many Nicodemuses about us, weak, poor sinners! But alas! they are all strong like Annas and Caiaphas, they are all wise like Pilate, and great and rich like Herod, and if Christ, the poor, pious, carpenter's son, the blameless but hated sectarian, was to be buried to-day, this whole city would probably furnish precious few Josephs, Nicodemuses, and Marys. And should we be among them, my friends?

IV. Jerusalem was surrounded with gardens. One of them, belonging to Joseph, was situated near the place where Christ was executed. The whole district of Jerusalem is rocky. The lime-stone of which it consists becomes harder as one descends, but is soft when situated high. In one of these rocks belonging to Joseph's garden, he had caused his own intended sepulchre to be cut out according to the existing custom, and a large stone slab was also prepared to guard the entrance. No corpse had ever been deposited there. Here Christ was to rest. They intended to give him a grave among the wicked; but with a rich and honorable man was he after his death. Nicodemus was at hand with his spices. Joseph had bought some fine linen to wrap up the body with a part of the spices of Nicodemus. Perhaps the linen was made into a long gown, for the word indicates both. Around his head they wound a napkin. It must now have been late. John, and Mary the mother of Christ, are not present. They seem to have returned as soon as they knew where the corps was to be carried. Poor Mary! she was already advanced in years and must have suffered much that day! As soon as she knew the body of her beloved son was in the hands of *friends*, who were to keep it till, after the feast, the formal burial could be attended to, she seems to have been prevailed upon to return home with John, whose mother she had become. We find, therefore, only Joseph, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses at the sepulchre. Hastily they now deposited the body of Christ there, because of the Jews' preparation; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. And they rolled the

stone unto the door of the sepulchre, and departed. Here finishes the history of our Lord's burial.

Ideas can be written down and objects can be painted, but emotions yield neither to the pen nor to the brush. Every one must experience for himself what it is to spend a solitary hour in the solemn sepulchre of Christ. Gethsemane and Calvary are awful places. The one will melt you down with fear and fluctuating hope, the other with love and gratitude and sorrow. But the scenes there, are almost too tremendous; the emotions which storm through your breast overmatch you; deep calls upon deep; Jehovah is passing by, in storm, earthquake and fire, and your thoughts are swallowed up before they ripen. Yet these are truly precious exercises to the dead, paralysed soul of fallen man, and the very strokes of the electricity of heaven. But when you are awakened, terrified, warned, quickened, melted there, then, O then come, sit down in the cool, dusky sepulchre of Jesus; shut out the world; gather in every thought; shut the door, and listen to the still small voice of Jehovah. Here, between these silent walls, time and space will vanish, and you will deceive yourself no more with ideas of great and small, and with fair promises of futurities that never come; but as the starry, boundless firmament falls whole into your little eye at even, so shall eternity fall into your soul. Here, the storm of sins, passions, wishes, duties and idle sorrows and idle joys will cease to roar; a deep calm will follow, and the unexplored ocean of your mind will reflect the countenance of heaven. O, it is a good, it is an awful place! But if the *place* is one fit

for solemn reflection, the *scene* is infinitely more so. Your sepulchre is not empty. But *one* step from you there lies a corps, there shines a pale and lifeless countenance that speaks worlds. Who is it? Who? A youth—an innocent, a holy youth! Ah, more than that, more than language can express. Why did he die so soon? How did he die? For whom? Down with your face upon the cold, damp stone, and answer,—answer! He was martyred to death, his soul is gone, and where?—To heaven, to prepare a place for you. For me? Yes, for you, *sinner, poor, perishing sinner, for you!* O love divine! thou art almighty; thou hast conquered; I am forever thine! Amen, so be it! Look into his face; it is yet full of love. The features of other dead men, though sinners and selfish, smile, as though even *their* departing spirits wished to leave the expression of kindness upon the clay which they inhabited. Here is the countenance of love, of divine benevolence itself. Have you no emotion, no tear of pious gratitude for him? Impossible! Where is the monster of a son that can stare insensibly on the pale face of his father's corps? Where the serpent of a daughter that can turn away with a dry eye from her lifeless mother's smile? Where is the stout-hearted, unnatural parent, who can nail up the coffin of his offspring without a falling tear? Here is *more* than father, *more* than mother, son, or daughter. Here is "the Word" "made flesh," the Son of God, the Saviour, the almighty, faithful friend of your perishing soul; here he is murdered innocently, that you, his murderer, you, the murderer of your own soul and of the souls of many others, might live.

But I have said it, emotions are not expressible by words. The feelings which the calm devout contemplation of the "man of sorrows" kindles in the heart, are sealed like the seven mysterious thunders of the apocalypse; they *must be felt*. It is but folly to Herod, the worldling, if he hears us talk of the beauties of Jesus's bleeding head, of that closed eye, those pale lips, those cold cheeks, the prints of those nails and the deep wound in his side. It is grievous to Caiaphas, the self-righteous casuist and moralist, to hear of the dying love of Christ to *sinner*s. The story of the gospel is nonsense to Pilate, the wise man of this world. Away with them, and the profane crowd that follows them in every age; away with them from the sepulchre of Christ. But let the thinking, reflecting, the poor, the humble come, and let their meditations be undisturbed. Heaven's gate is open while they dwell in the silent cave. Jesus is there, and this is enough.

But while in this changing world, they cannot always remain at the delightful spot which we have visited to-day. Duty calls them out, and they follow; but as they go out they take Christ with them, and often, while externally employed in secular works, their heart, their spirit ever and anon breathes the spicy atmosphere of the sacred tomb. "All the thoughts and exercises of my mind," says a certain devout man, "are employed in the tomb of Jesus. He is dead, I die with him. To please him, I will mortify my sinful flesh. All my desires and lusts will I take captive. I will bury them in his grave. Never shall they rule again in me. His death shall be my life. If I die

with him, I shall also live with him. I will wet his grave with tears of penitence. My heart shall be the fine clean linen into which I will wrap him. Thus will his sufferings bless my soul. I will seal up his remembrance in my heart. Love shall be the seal. When I die, I shall die in his arms. Delightful rest shall I enjoy there. His shroud shall be my ornament; his coffin my grave."

O my friends, we must die with Christ, we must be buried with him, or we shall never rise, never live, never reign with him. To die to the world, to die to ourselves, — O it is a great lesson! But, if the sacred word before us, and if all the laws of the universe and the deep and silent warnings and groanings of conscience, are not so many lies, then it is the only way yet open for us to escape the eternal terrors of the second death. Only he who dies with Christ may like him boldly march up to the king of terrors with the triumphant song in his mouth, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Amen.

MEDITATIONS.

X.

THE GREAT MORNING.

MATTHEW XXVIII, 1—15.

MARK XVI, 1—11; LUKE XXIV, 1—12; JOHN XX, 1—18.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by his feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid; go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the sol-

diers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught ; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away ; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment ; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified : he is risen ; he is not here : behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre ; for they trembled, and were amazed ; neither said they anything to any man ; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments : And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead ? He is not here, but is risen ; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre ; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that

other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and, as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Kabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

THE history of our Lord's resurrection from the dead forms the second part of the general subject upon which our series of discourses treats. It is also the shorter part. For, although the former occupied only the space of six days, while this covers forty days, so few of the events of this period are recorded, that it seems hardly to compare with the last week of our Lord's mortal life, if you number the scenes or regard the particularity with which the attending circumstances are stated. I call this the second part, because the *nature* of our scene has changed, almost throughout, and in many respects from one pole to the other. Thus far, the picture was full of gloom. Satan went on from victory to victory. Christ wept even at

his triumphant entrance into the holy city; and what he endured at the institution of the sacrament amid the contentions of his disciples for preeminence, and from the anticipation of his separation from them, and what he suffered at Gethsemane, before the Sanhedrim, before Pilate, before Herod and his court, in the judgment hall, under "the horrible whip" of the Roman soldiers, before the raging mob, and on Golgotha, we have seen successively. We have, I trust, mourned and suffered with him, and that for our good. As his last hour approached, we heard him praying in the midst of wrongs, comfort others, while himself distressed, we saw him save others, while he was surrounded with death; then, overwhelmed with the terrors of convulsed nature and still more with the sins of a world, the penalties of a broken law, and the awful darkness spread over his Father's countenance, we saw him almost despair; we saw him struggle, conquer, pray again, and die for us: and the mingled and changing emotions of our breasts were as when the stormy wind rolls up clouds on the horizon, and piles and towers them up as though an eternal and heaven-high wall was to be fixed, to shut out light and life from us forever. Here and there indeed a ray shot through, and the storm defeating its own purpose, unveiled now and then the pure sky, and by its own gloom set forth the loveliness of its color: yet, on the whole, the element about us was full of frown and thunder; and had this scene lasted forever, existence would have been a burden. By and by, however, the clouds passed, the storm ceased howling, Jesus slept and rested beyond the reach of the world and of Satan.

We buried him among loving friends; we saw the tear of affection shed; and the meditations, to which we attended in his solemn and silent grave, were, I trust, sweet and profitable to us. Now, the sun is about to rise. The cock has crowed time and again. Already the light glimmers in the east. Pious women, here and there in the slumbering city, prepare their spices and ointments to visit the sacred grave; and we are called to accompany them, to share in their work of love, their anxieties, and their joys. What! angels in heaven are preparing once more to descend, and in the bowels of the earth a supernatural power moves once more, to strike its solid pillars, and to shake its deep cast foundation. The poor, forsaken sufferer of Gethsemane and Golgotha takes again the life which he laid down, and all the prerogatives of absolute divinity. Christ prepares to rise. Rise, my soul, with him, and for one hour breathe the atmosphere of the new creation. For *thee* he died, and, immortal thanks be to him, *for thee* he rises again.

The remainder of our task, my friends, is a delightful one. Yet, it is no less difficult, interesting, and important, and I approach it with trembling diffidence. It is *difficult*, because the accounts of evangelists are seemingly irreconcilable, and have been pronounced, boldly and often, to be *really* so. And we are to reconcile them. It is an interesting task, I say, because the story is an unique one. Christ, whom we have to accompany, to see, to hear, to observe, lives and moves no more in a mortal, but in an immortal body, which, not by miracle, but by nature, is exempt from the laws of matter. Now he is in heaven, now on earth; now

here, now there; he needs no food, but he can take it without prejudice to the spirituality of his frame. We see, as it were, in a glass, yea, in reality what we are intended to become. He is altogether the same as before in point of love and kindness, and his plan and his work have not changed: but he acts and speaks with absolute authority: and he returns at last to his kingdom in a divine triumph, leaving behind him a church, a preacher of eternal righteousness to every creature, together with the unfailing promises of his Spirit and of his ultimate coming to judge the world in righteousness and to renovate heaven and earth. It is an important task, I say, because the resurrection of Christ is the seal of religion, the foundation of every Christian's hope, and the sure pledge of eternal ruin to every despiser of his love. "The task is great and arduous," (I use the words of Augustin) "but God is our help." If *he* will vouchsafe to me his assistance, (and I think he has often done so during the course of these meditations) I still anticipate much of divine enjoyment and profit for myself and those who may hear me.

Our plan will be, or rather remain, simple through the remainder of these discourses. We shall reconcile the evangelists in their accounts of Easter forenoon, where they seem chiefly to disagree — and this will be our task to-day; afterwards we shall dwell in order upon those few apparitions of our Lord, the particulars of which we read in the gospels; and finally, we shall attend to the ascension of Christ and hear his parting command to us, and his parting promise. "And this we will do if God permit"

To prevent all misunderstanding in our meditation to-day, I must premise two remarks.

We shall in this instance find time only for the exhibition of a connected and continuous account of the events of the forenoon after our Lord's resurrection, without being able to show at every step, *how this* arrangement is the preferable one, *why this* harmony of the four evangelists is satisfactory. This my hearers may easily do themselves, if they will just take the trouble to read and compare those short portions of scripture which I have taken for my text. But to succeed in their examination of the consistency of which I shall state, they must keep in view, that there are various ways of relating facts, of which the evangelists make use just like other men.

I remark, therefore, first, that there are three different methods of relating;—(*a.*) the proper chronological method, i. e. that of relating the several facts of the history of a nation, or a century, or a man, more or less selected and abridged, but each in its place and order of time: (*b.*) the particular, or disconnecting method, if you permit me to call it so, i. e. that which takes *one* fact out of a larger number, and gives it in its details without connecting it before or after with the adjoining events. All anecdotes are of this kind. Of such facts John has given us a number in his gospel, and especially in the history of our Lord's resurrection: (*c.*) the *collective* method, i. e. that which takes similar events and circumstances together and gives them to us without any reference to order or time, intending merely to state facts. Thus the three first evangelists state that *females* went out early to the sepulchre, merely

because it was a fact that some females did go out, though not at the same hour, nor together; and they state what happened in and at the sepulchre, and on the return of the women, merely because it did thus happen, but wholly aside from the order of time. So you will find sentiments uttered by our Lord, and parables frequently arranged together upon this very same principle, without any reference to chronology. And that this method has been adopted by some of the best ancient writers is well known. In harmonizing, therefore, the accounts of different writers, you must always be careful to inquire whether they do pursue the same method, or different ones; and if different ones, then you must, in point of time, rectify the collective relation by the chronological one, and complete and arrange it in its details by the particular account at your command. Otherwise you get yourself into unnecessary and endless trouble. This is the way in which I shall endeavor to harmonize the events of the history before us.

The *second* remark I wish to make, is intended to free you at once from unnecessary anxieties, as though the reality of Christ's resurrection was now depending upon *my success*, or that of any other man in harmonizing its accounts. I should not tremble if it were, but you perhaps would. But this is not the case. There lies so much of agreement and harmony on the very surface of the evangelists, even in the calumniated history of the resurrection, that it would have the verdict of truth before any civil bar of justice. You shall judge for yourselves. The great features of it are alike in all the four evangelists.

The points of unquestionable and unquestioned agreement are as follows. 1. Christ rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. 2. The event was first announced to some female believers, and not to the eleven disciples. 3. The messengers were angels. 4. It was communicated to them on an early visit to the sepulchre. 5. The disciples also saw Christ, but not till afterwards. 6. They saw him without any apparition of angels or spirits. 7. The females found the sepulchre open. 8. What the females heard and saw, they saw and heard it partly in the sepulchre, partly near it. 9. The disciples themselves never met Christ at the sepulchre, but in different places. Thus far they positively agree. Other facts, stated perhaps by one evangelist and merely omitted by others, are not even seemingly contradictory to the whole of the event, and those which seem to oppugn each other, will find their solution, I hope, in the exposition now to be given.

About the reality of Christ's *death*, there prevailed but one profound conviction among friends and foes. The soldiers think it quite unnecessary to break his bones; Pilate receives with confidence the official report of the centurion, that the Nazarene was dead, and immediately gives permission to bury him. The Jews think it unworthy of their effort to prevent his burial, and on requesting afterwards a guard, they merely suggest that he might be stolen, but by no means that he might revive. Joseph, Nicodemus, and the women lay the corps, wrapped into thin linen, into a cold sepulchre filled with one hundred pounds of

spices, — all of which was calculated, not to revive the body of a half dead person, as some have shamelessly asserted, but to destroy in a very short time the most healthy and stout constitution; etc.

After three o'clock, they took him from the cross, and between four and five they must have been through the burial; and rolling the stone before the sepulchre they went their way. Then the great Sabbath commenced and the high priest had just time enough to request a Roman guard from the governor to place it before the sepulchre and to seal the stone with his seal. Joseph, Nicodemus and the females being already gone and remaining at home all the Sabbath, according to law, did neither hear nor apprehend anything of this last measure of the Jews; for Joseph lived not in his garden, but in the city. Much less could the other disciples and friends of Christ receive any notice of it. They were scattered through the city, some perhaps were gone to Bethany; the gardener of Joseph was prevented by the Sabbath from giving them any intelligence; and in fact, the doleful story was ended, their last hope extinguished, and the last spark of curiosity, or inquiry quenched.

The body, however, was not properly *buried*, but only *deposited*. It was yet to be anointed, placed in a coffin, and put into one of the niches in Joseph's sepulchre. As yet it lay upon a bier. The Sabbath ended too late in the evening to render it expedient for anybody to visit the sepulchre, and indeed it was not till then, that the fact that christ had been deposited in Joseph's sepulchre, became known among his friends. But early the next, i. e. Sunday morning, before daylight, Mary

Magdalene rises up. She prepares spices and ointments. According to Matthew and Mark, Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and Salome join her in this work of love. They knew nothing of the sixteen Roman soldiers before the grave; for even Joseph could not have heard of it till Saturday evening after the sun had set. Their only anxiety, therefore, is, "who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" The keeper of the garden could hardly be expected to do it alone, and laborers were not as yet about the way. Yet, their longing desire is too great; they proceed through the dusky, silent region, carefully avoiding the great road, to do which was easy enough, if Josephus's account (Jewish war B. 5, ch. 2.) of the gardens and vineyards about Jerusalem, is correct.

While these pious females were yet on their way, when the morning began to dawn, the great hour was come. Four soldiers were watching before the sealed stone, the others reclining to and fro, but quite at hand, and slumbering, when a powerful shock, if not several, waked them up. The rock shook, and every object about them seemed to move. The first thought which must necessarily have struck these responsible men, was, is the seal of the sepulchre destroyed, or injured? Their eyes turn, as it were instinctively, to the stone, and behold, a being, flashing like lightning, stands there, and, as with a magic touch, rolls away the mighty rock, and sits down upon it, as when a lion coucheth to expect with royal ease and disdain the vain assault of crawling insects. The moment after the stone was rolled away, the women appear at the gate of the garden, or farm. But either the angel had

not yet taken his place upon the grave-stone, or what is more probable, the eyes of the women "were holden" that they did not notice him. Confounded and afraid, the soldiers had fled into some corner of the garden, and thus the prospect from the garden-gate was one of solitude and breathless silence, as moments after a shock of earthquake are apt to be. The grave was open, and the first thought which struck Mary Magdalene was, alas! they have taken him hence. But who? Joseph? O no! why should he? Alas, it is but too probable that the Jews have come to carry him away, to spend upon him the remainder of their rage. At all events, something melancholy, it strikes her, has happened. Overflowing as her feelings ever were, she cannot bear her apprehension alone, and leaving the two other women, she hastens right back to the city to apprise Peter and John of what she had seen, and communicate to them her fears. In the meantime the other females enter, approach the grave, and all at once they see the supernatural being sitting upon the stone. Fear takes hold of them, but the angel's kind address keeps them from sinking; "Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus; which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay, and go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him, lo, I have told you." So the angel. They, filled with awe and joy, depart and run to bring his disciples word. From the angel's descent to this point, hardly five minutes could have elapsed. During this time, the soldiers became satisfied that there was a more than

human arm here displayed, and made their escape. Their interview with the high-priests will receive a word of attention on some future opportunity. In the meantime, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, as they hasten back to the city, meet Jesus unexpectedly, and probably not far from the garden of Joseph. This interview took place after that which Christ had with Mary Magdalene, (compare Mark) and to make this consistent, you may suppose that these two elderly women stopped at the house of some neighbor to recover from their excitement of mind, and then proceeded to the city; or they may have run over to Bethany to some disciples there, and met Christ by the way. As soon as they see him, they sink down at his feet. But he addresses them: "Be not afraid, go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me." Knowing, probably, or at least apprehending that Mary Magdalene had gone to Peter and John, and that these two must now needs be on one of the ways leading to the sepulchre, and not at home, they naturally direct their steps towards the dwellings of some other disciples, or to Bethany, as I suggested; and this makes it so much the easier to see why they did not meet Peter and John. But whatsoever roads they took, it was a bypath, and to miss each other was very easy.

The three pious females, whom we have now accompanied, were not the only ones who intended to share in the privilege of anointing the Lord's body. Probably soon after them another company of pious women set out for the same purpose. Some of them were rich. Joanna was among them, the wife of Chuza, who was

Herod's steward, and probably Susanna and several others. They, too, (and what was more natural than that?) had their anxieties by the way, who should remove for them the heavy stone from the mouth of the sepulchre. At the sepulchre, they had expected to meet their three friends. But these had already fled, and so had the soldiers; and the angel on the tombstone had disappeared. The sepulchre is open; they enter in. The darkness of the cave at this early season did not permit them at first to distinguish whether Christ's body was there, or not. But soon they are aware, to their astonishment, that the corpse is gone, and they see two angels sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where Jesus lay. Mark mentions but one, because one only spoke. Luke says, in a general way, that they said unto the women, etc. So say Matthew and Mark, generally, that the *two* malefactors reviled Christ, while Luke, being particular, informs of the repentance of one of them. And so do we speak every day in the language of common intercourse, and our characters, as lovers of truth and proper witnesses at courts of justice, are not invalidated thereby. The address and charge of this angel to these women is naturally in substance the same which is given to the others a few minutes ago, by the angel sitting on the rock. They flee as soon as they can gather strength enough, and some of them say nothing to anybody, but hasten home; others communicate to the disciples here and there, as they were able to find them, what they had seen and heard; but they find little or no credence. And what was more natural than all this?

The message which the angel gave to the women in two repeated instances, seems at first inconsistent with fact. They send word to the disciples, that Christ would see them in Galilee, whither they are ordered to proceed. But Christ appeared to the eleven and to some others sundry times, at Jerusalem, during the course of the very week already commenced. Even this very day he appeared to Peter and to the two disciples that went to Emmaus. A great handle has been made of this circumstance; but the solution is equally easy and satisfactory. Matt. xxvi. 32, and Mark, xvi. 7, Christ predicts his own death and resurrection, and adds that, after his resurrection, he will appear to his disciples in Galilee. This was a general hint to the disciples, and all his followers and brethren, to proceed to Galilee after his death; and certainly Galilee was a more safe and convenient place than Jerusalem for religious interviews, or meetings, where so many were to be present. Of this hint, they as a body are now reminded. Why they did not all at once remove to Galilee, may have been owing to some private specification of time given by Christ previously, but not recorded; or more probably to the fact that Christ appeared unto them at Jerusalem the very evening after his resurrection, and afterwards again; on which account they waited until he should give them to know that it was now time to proceed to Galilee to the more general and long promised meeting, where probably the five hundred brethren, of whom Paul speaks, were present. And it is easy to see the propriety of their conduct in this respect. The appearance of Christ at Jerusalem, and to the two disciples on their way to

Emmaus, was merely intended to settle them in the conviction that he was alive again; and what was more necessary than this, if they were really to travel to Galilee to the mountain specified, to meet Christ there? This appearance was never intended, therefore, to be announced to the disciples previously. The angels have no charge to speak of these sudden interviews, and Christ, as we shall see from his words to Mary Magdalene, is purposely silent on this subject; purposely, I say, because he must have known, surely, what he was going to do; and yet he says not a word about it. Thus these fabricated difficulties all vanish.

It is worthy of notice, that this latter company of females had no interview with Christ himself, and it is to *these* that the two disciples walking to Emmaus, had referred in Luke, xxiv. 22, 23.

Now, Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene return. It is now fairly day, and the sun about to rise. They come somewhat late, probably because Peter and John lived in different parts of the city, and then they needed to get up, and dress, it being early yet; and it was almost unavoidable that they should propose many questions to the affrighted sister, and wish to hear her accounts fully, before they could resolve upon a visit to the grave at this season. At last, they set out, and that they continued asking many an anxious and unbelieving question more, as they passed along, you may easily imagine. They feel, however, more and more interested; and as they approach the garden, the younger disciple, i. e. John, runs ahead. He stoops down and looks into the sepulchre; there are the linen clothes, but the body of Christ is really gone. Thus,

much is however clear now, the body is not stolen; for had it been stolen, the costly linen would not have been carefully taken off the body and left behind in the grave. Peter and Mary soon follow John. Now, they all enter. There are the linen clothes, and the napkin, wrapt up, lies separately. All indicates care and order, and the heart of Mary is at least so far consoled, that it is now probable the body of the beloved Master is still in the hands of friends. John marks all the particulars well, and believes, (John, xx. 8) i. e. gathers for himself the conviction that Jesus is taken away. "For as yet," he says himself, "they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead." Satisfied, as they think, that there is nothing more to be done here, the two disciples return to the city, planning, perhaps, among themselves to go as soon as possible to Joseph, and to ask him what had become of the body, etc.

Poor human speculation is a miserable guide *to* piety and *in* piety. Here let the heart speak! There listen and follow, and do not grieve it to silence with cold reasoning. Poor Peter and poor John! back they went, and many a wise remark may have been made by them, as they walked, to explain to each other the probable singular occurrence of this morning. Mary's burning love to Christ will not let her depart. *Here* they deposited him, and *here* she saw him on that melancholy evening, and *here* she seeks him, and cannot get away. To go back! why, a king's palace would have been a wilderness to her. Oh! the grave was empty, and the world was empty. Whom had she in heaven but him, and there was none upon earth whom

she desired besides him. There she stands, the lovely sister, at the entrance of the empty cave. Seven demons had possessed her not long since, and Jesus's powerful hand had freed her, poor sinner; and ever since, she had enjoyed the foretaste of heaven in communion with him, and he had poured a thousand blessings on her soul. And now his enemies have murdered him, and even his friends carry his body about, and she knows not where he is, and is not permitted to do him the last melancholy service of love. It is too hard, it is too hard to bear; it seems to rend her soul from her. She stands, and thinks and knows not where to go nor what to do, and the two disciples are hardly through the gate, when she wraps her face in her garment, and a stream of tears rolls freely down her cheeks. Weep, dear child of God! To weep for Christ is sweet. Blessed are they that weep thus: they shall be comforted. Yea, they *are* already comforted; for one tear wept for him is worth a thousand worlds. "O, that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night" for him who is "the chief among ten thousands and the one altogether lovely." There is none like unto him. Take him away, and I must curse my existence. If *he* is a phantom; if *he* is not: then "let the day perish wherein I was born."

How long she wept, who can tell? She stoops down and looks into the *empty grave*, — most unjustifiable before the bar of reason, certainly; but most *consonant to her feelings*: to seek where there was nothing, apparently, to seek, and to hope against hope. And, lo! there are two men sitting in the grave. Her eyes,

dim with weeping, did not permit her to distinguish, nor her state of mind *to reflect*, and she takes them for attendants of Joseph, who may have entered, she thinks, while she was weeping. "Woman, why weepest thou?" says one. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." So she. But hark! something, some steps perhaps, sound behind her, and she turns back to see who comes. It is a man. She knows him not. But who should come here so early, she thinks again; he must be the gardener of Joseph, whose attendants she had just noticed in the grave. "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" he asks sweetly and full of sympathy. "Sir," she replies, encouraged, "if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." The pure language of affection, — affection so strong as to exclude for the moment every maturer thought and reflection. Why, Mary, he might have said, what dost thou want to do with the dead body of thy deceased friend? His soul has fled, his mortal eyes, and his sweet voice speak no more comfort to poor distressed souls. Till thou arrive in heaven, thou canst enjoy his society no more. His body of clay must moulder away. And why wilt thou not leave him "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust?" And what could she have replied? Nothing. But our Lord understands and appreciates well the language of the heart. The moment was come. "Mary!" he says, and the harmony of heaven thrills in his voice. Mary! Amazed, she looks at him. Is it he? It is he! and alive! The transition is too rapid; the joy too great; "Rabboni! Master!" and she lies

at his feet. O, heaven on earth! what is like unto that moment, when the first "Rabboni" bursts from our hearts and lips! Now, oh now, it is worth while to live. Now let me live forever! for Jesus lives, and is my friend. And

"When he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want beside?"

Now, "truly the light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun." Now, there is meaning in my existence. I am a man, I am a man now, while before I was a poor brute, a silly, wandering sheep. It is done; the great problem of my existence is solved; the poor heart is satisfied at last, and eternity shines brighter than the firmament of heaven.

Jesus, ever the same, ever divine, replies with heavenly calmness: "Touch me not," Mary. This is no time for embracing my knees, for kissing my hands, for watering my feet with thy tears. We shall meet again. "For I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, and to my God and to your God."

Here closes the history of this morning, a morning of unutterable interest to our world, and to our souls, and one never to be repeated. Yet, while all these events transpire, an iron slumber rests upon yonder Jerusalem. There the priests and Levites, lifeless hirelings, sleep, jaded with the tiresome exercises of the sanctuary, with which they would gladly have dispensed, had they known how to get money without

them. There is slumbering the thoughtless multitude, well satisfied with the round of external performances, and the sacrifices of bulls and goats. There you find Pilate, and Herod, and many a Dives rolling, half-sleeping, half awake upon his uneasy couch, writhing under the consequences of a wild nightly banquet. And if any one is fairly awake, it is the miser worshipping upon the knees of his heart his accursed mammon. A picture of the world drawn to the very life. While Christ rises as the almighty friend and Saviour of sinners, before those "who seek him early," the world give themselves no concern. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of hands. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." Prov. vi. 10. "Sleep on now, thoughtless, careless souls, and take your rest," but know that the sword of divine justice hangs menacing over your defenceless heads. There is one among the nights to come, and you know it not, when in the solitary midnight hour the knell of your dying bell shall wake you up from the slumber of sin. Affrighted, you will look about, and behold! your sands are run out, and the icy, merciless hand of death has hold upon your heart-string, to tear it asunder as a spider's thread, and to cast your unprepared distracted soul into the unexplored abyss of eternity. O what a moment that will be! Forever gone by is now the slighted day of mercy, the time of repentance and faith, whose merciful and glorious purpose, whose all-absorbing importance you will then perceive with horror and with the outbursting lamentation: "Wo is

unto me; for the harvest is past, the summer ended, and I am not saved."

But let us close with the lovely part of our picture. There are many mourning souls and weeping Marys in Zion, and unto them I could wish to open the whole treasury of heavenly consolation if I was able. But if I am not able to do it, the solemn history of this morning shows them who is able, and how to get access to him.

Nothing is so wonderful as the first waking up to a spiritual life; nothing so delightful as the first love, the first grateful emotion of the sinner who has "obtained mercy" and pardon. There the tabernacle of God is with man, and heaven is begun on earth. The fountain of life is open, and springs high before the withering, languishing soul; and she drinks in energy and life and joy divine; her "peace" is "like a river," and her "righteousness as the waves of the sea." The dew of heaven descends gently and refreshing, and the early rain and the latter rain fail not; eternal comfort and prosperity have commenced. To sit at the feet of Jesus, to live under the smiles of his countenance, and to breathe the atmosphere of heaven, what more can be wanting to perfect earthly bliss. We, then, wish and pray that this happy state may last forever; we fondly hope it will; and if we were faithful and kept humble, it would. But the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and its thorough cure is not the work of a day. Unfaithfulness, a false trust in means, self-complacency, and many other secret besetting sins, must be purged away by darkness and distress of mind, and many a

trial. And, oh! this is a bitter lesson to him who has tasted how good and how precious the Lord is. Now he is ready to endure anything, if Christ will not withdraw from him his love and the hope of salvation. No more to be permitted to say, "My beloved is mine and I am his," — is harder to bear than the curse and contempt of all this world. "O, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil!" These are days of weeping and lamentation, and nights of wakefulness and distress; and no man can help us, and our desolate heart seems to be armed with steel and adamant against every drop of comfort. Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there! Then Christ is dead and buried to us, and we know not where they have laid him, and we seek him whom our soul loveth, but we find him not. Well, my suffering brother or sister, mourn and weep; it will do you good. To weep for Christ is sweet. But I beseech you, do not despair. Your Saviour is not dead, but liveth; go and seek him! If the bustle of the busy world, and the multitude of duties will not permit you to seek him by day or in the evening, then seek him in the night season, like the Shulamite, or rise up early in the morning like Mary, when it begins to dawn, when all is stillness about you. Prepare the ointment of a grateful remembrance of his dying love to you; seek his silent grave. There weep; it is a

good place; there pour out your soul. He will hear every sob of your bosom, and notice every solitary, unheeded tear of distress. Soon the dear Rabboni will whisper behind you, with the voice of unutterable love, "Mary;" here I am, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, thou art mine, and none shall pluck thee out of my hand. And you, leaning again upon your beloved as in days past, will exclaim as you did then, Lord, it is enough, for thou art mine! Amen.

MEDITATIONS.

XI.

THE WALK TO EMMAUS.

LUKE XXIV, 13—35.

And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are to come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them what things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre: and when they found not his body, they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not

Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and break, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

JERUSALEM was yet buried in deep sleep, and its dwellings, streets and markets were silent as the grave. Caiaphas indulging his morning slumbers beneath the silk curtains of his damask couch. The Nazarine is buried in the cold tomb, and the soldiers of Pilate and the broad seal of his Holiness guard the sepulchre. Sweet dreams of the future prosperity of that lucrative hierarchy whose head he is, a hierarchy growing and expanding in his imagination, until the arrival of that warlike Messiah, who is to raise for every circumcised rebel and wretch a golden throne of infernal selfishness upon the blood and the ruins of a poor, perishing world; — sweet dreams — in point of moral character, not a whit above the feigned imaginations of Satan in Milton's 'Paradise Lost' — occupy and refresh the mind and heart of Caiaphas, when the heavy knocker of his palace gate is touched with a hasty and powerful hand. He starts up. What is the matter? Perhaps one of the fatlings of my flock is near death, and wants to purchase, for his last hour, the precious consolations of Sinai's law. For surely, a lean and poor

sheep ought to be happy to go to eternity under the cheaper prayers of a simple Levite. He listens, reclining upon one arm, one foot already out of his bed, when his chamberlain approaches his bed-chamber with steps long and quick, and before the door gives the usual sign for being admitted. He is called in, and interrogated. "The soldiers from the sepulchre of the Nazarene are below and wish to see your holiness on important and pressing business." "The soldiers from the sepulchre? Not possible!"—"With your leave, sir, the very ones." One minute, and the high-priest is in his dress. "Lead them into the private council-chamber below, and call the whole Sanhedrim together quickly." The Sanhedrim assembled, the Roman officer at the head of the guard is called in and relates some of the facts to which we attended in our last meditation,—and the seventy wise men of Israel are again at their wit's end; at their *wit's* end, but not at the end of their *wickedness*. Is he indeed risen! No matter. One lie more, and why not one thousand?—and truth will perish at last, and the cause of Satan prosper. "Here is a handsome present for your trouble and fright, my brave fellows," says the high-priest. "Just say to the common people, who know not the law and are cursed,—just say, We slept, and his disciples stole him. And if Pilate should say aught, we will give him such a hint of the true state of the case, and accompany the hint with such an appendix from our treasury, as will avert from you all undesirable consequences of your kind services to us." The soldiers depart, the Sanhedrim adjourns not without those se-

cret misgivings which have well been called the beginning of judgment to come ! You ask why I relate this event. To connect the history of the *forenoon* and the *afternoon* of our Lord's resurrection-day by *this* event, the only one which remained to be mentioned among the many and various occurrences of that important morning. The sun rose and filled the city again with noise and bustle and the temple with sacrifices, fire, incense, songs and psalms, with purchasers and sellers, and with the large assembly of formalists and hypocrites, mingled with a few humble and sincere worshippers upon whom a better day was soon to dawn. The sun reached his meridian height and passed it, and as he descended, two more appearances of our risen Lord signalized this, in the history of our world, unparalleled day. I refer to his appearances to Peter (which the entire absence of particulars obliges us to pass by) and to the event related in our text. To the consideration of this portion of holy writ, let us now attend with solemnity of mind and with sincere desires for spiritual instruction and profit ; and may He with whom is the residue of the spirit, prepare our minds, guide our thoughts, and seal instruction to our hearts.

- I. The conversion of the two disciples ;
 - II. Their reproof and instruction ;
 - III. The divine illumination of their minds ; and,
 - IV. The joy of their hearts ;
- These are the four topics to which our attention will chiefly be turned.

I. "And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three score furlongs." Who were they? One of them was Cleopas, or Cleophas, the husband of that Mary who was the sister of the mother of Christ. He was also the brother of Joseph, the supposed father of our Lord. He was one of those who belonged to the *narrower circle* of the friends of Christ, and who remained in the most intimate connection with the apostles ever afterwards. And if Nathaniel was the other, I should not be surprised. At all events, this other one also must have been one of the more trusty and sincere friends of our Lord, one waiting for the kingdom of heaven, and fully prepared to enter into all the feelings of that little flock which then was scattered as sheep without a shepherd. All which these two men knew of the occurrences of the morning, was the avowal of the *second* company of women who went to anoint the body of Christ, and that of Peter and John's subsequent visit to the sepulchre. You remember what I said in our last meditation respecting this second company of females. Having heard these limited and imperfect accounts which contained nothing of comfort, our two pilgrims set out on foot for Emmaus, a village about seven and a half miles from Jerusalem. Either they lived there, or they went out on business; or perhaps they wished to withdraw a little from the noise and the distractions of that city which now had become to them an intolerable abode. The latter supposition is more agreeable both to the state of *their minds* and the nature of the conversation, and especially to the fact that Christ thought them pre-

pared to receive that distinguishing manifestation of his love to them, those solemn instructions, and those soul-refreshing communications of his spirit and his grace, which, as we shall see, were their peculiar and blessed privilege that day. You are aware that these two men were sufficiently enlightened already to expect no warlike prince in the Messiah. With *them* he was to be a *prince of peace*, a teacher of righteousness, the restorer of primitive innocence, simplicity and happiness, the comfort and glory of Israel, who, by the means of superior wisdom, righteousness and love, should bring all the kings of the earth to a willing submission to his sceptre. A week ago, their voices had joined on the Mount of Olives in a peaceful and holy song of praise to the Son of David, who came to Jerusalem, meek and lowly, riding on an ass; and they had no objection, then, to his peaceful and humble exterior. They knew him too well to expect any other administration from him than that of equity and love; and what they were ignorant of, was only the pervading spirituality of his kingdom, the free, grand, sovereign dispensation of its mercies to all ready to receive them; and especially the *manner* in which it was to come, i. e. through reproach, weakness, and death.

They have hardly passed the gates of Jerusalem, when one of them, breaking the silence, gives vent to his feelings in some such strain as this: "Well, my dear brother, he is dead, our Master is no more! I cannot, *cannot* believe it; it seems like a distressing, doleful dream to me, that he should have been scourged and crucified and buried; but alas, alas! it

is but too true. And if a man be dead, shall he live again? O, where is the promise of his coming, and the hope of Israel! And must we die without seeing the salvation of God's people? According to the prophets, the time is at hand, and he himself said and did many things, which justified our expectations of him; and he was a man dear to us, and full of the wisdom, power, and spirit of God. When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him. He taught with power, and not as our scribes; and when he spoke comfort, it was like manna and milk. My thoughts were otherwise; soon every heart will love him; the world will choose him for her friend and for her king, and the glory and salvation of Israel draweth nigh. But ah! he moulders in the dust,—*he is dead*,—*he is dead*,—and the glowing spark of my fondest hope is now extinguished in the deep darkness of his grave."

And the reply of his companion was equally replete with sorrow: "O, stop, you break my heart. You know I loved him as much as any one of you did; and ah! I cannot forgive it to our high-priests. It was abominable! And were it not for their sacred office, I should curse them with the heaviest imprecation of the law. Could I but have died with him, then I should be at ease and rid of trouble, and rest with my father, for I am weary of life. But you heard, I suppose, of Chuza's wife, and the rest who went to the sepulchre, and saw angels who said he lived; and of Peter and John; they all found the grave open, and what do you think?" "Ah! as to the women," the other rejoined,

“it was dark when they went out, and they were fearful, and thought they saw and heard something. Peter and John went out when it was clear day, and they found nothing but an empty grave; and what does that prove? After all we have been mistaken about our pious friend. A holy, good brother he was, and indeed he seems to have thought himself the Messiah, or we misunderstood him, it may be; mistakes are easy. At all events, the Messiah he was not, for he is dead and buried, and Israel is not delivered, and the kingdom of God has not come.”

So they. Events like the death of Christ, and mistakes like those of our disciples, are very common in the history of the Church. In this world, Herod is king, and Caiphas high-priest, and Christ is condemned and crucified time and again, and his people are laughed to scorn as fools, and trodden under foot and cast out as the offscouring of the world. Where is the truly pious king in all the eighteen centuries of our era who had faith and devotion enough wholly to lay down his crown and sceptre at the feet of Christ! whose cabinet was not more or less based upon the low principles of brute force and self-interest, and whose course was not defiled with the maxims and practices of the world? Can anything be more scarce than such a king? What has the true Church of Christ yet experienced on earth, more than bare suffering? Blessed be God, she needs no more, and if that also be denied her, she needs not that! She knows, and she alone, how to grow and spread amid the terrors of persecution. She has realized the fable of the phoenix coming forth young and fresh from the burning furnace,

and has done so more than once. But while the storm roars and the flames of persecution rage, the faith of many Christians is tried severely, and many a half despairing glance, and many a half-murmuring sigh ascend to heaven. The apostolic age had not yet expired, when the streets of Rome were already illuminated by burning Christians wrapped in pitch-cloth, while others, disguised in wild beasts' skins, were hunted down, and torn to pieces by dogs. The blood of more than forty thousand Christians was spilled before the close of the first century. Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Antoninus, Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Dioclesian, made havoc of the little inoffensive flock of Christ. Under the latter monarch, seventeen thousand fell in one month, and within ten years, one hundred and forty-four thousand fell in Egypt alone, besides seven hundred thousand that died in public works to which they were condemned, and in banishment. Against the handful of poor, ignorant Waldenses, who had nothing and knew nothing but their Bible, the Inquisition must be raised, and the judgment-day alone will disclose the horrors of its unexplored caverns and jails. One single Arian queen from among the northern nations butchered one hundred thousand Trinitarians before she died. Under the hand of the mad Spaniards there fell in Holland upwards of one hundred thousand so called heretics. France needs but to be mentioned to excite horror and disgust. All that is cruel, all that is shameless, was practised upon Protestant heretics there. Bartholomew's night, in 1572, will be a prominent and absorbing case in the decisions of the judg-

ment day. Besides the scenes of Paris, those of Meaux, Angers, Orleans, Troyes, Bourges, La Charité and Lyons, will come to light ; nor will the bloody high-mass of Gregory XIII. at Rome, with his Cardinals, and all their pomp and exultation, be forgotten, by which they commemorated the death of one hundred thousand innocent persons. Louis XIV. of France, the admired monarch, the great man, (though Lucifer is greater than he) committed outrages against Christians which Nero and Dioclesian did not commit. The scenes of England are too familiar to my audience to need a mention. About the middle of the 17th century, from forty to fifty thousand defenceless individuals suffered death within a few days in Ireland. And Scotland, Spain, Germany, Bohemia, etc., would furnish us with facts sufficient to fill the world with them. And how could the Church live, you ask? How she lived, I cannot tell ; but that she did live, we know. Yea, what I have mentioned could not impede her growth. Under such circumstances, the Church not only lived, but budded and blossomed like Carmel and Sharon. But when I think of the sealing up of the Bible till the art of printing was invented, when I think of the one thousand years darkness from Augustine to Luther ; when I think of all the ruinous errors in doctrine and practice, which crept in at different times into Christendom ; when I think of all the sects which sprung up, and whose very names would fill pages ; when I think of all the scientific and literary crusades made against the Bible ; when I think of the calm, strong-minded scepticism of England, by which the five senses which every animal has in common with us, were made to defy and

to silence the divine voice within man, and the foreboding of eternity, or of the sparkling wit and the learned atheism of France, by which they meant to prove that their souls and ours were made of mud, — or of the criticisms and metaphysics of Germany, that were to convert us, the one into Grammars and Lexicons, the other into vapor and nothing; when I think of these batteries, all directed against the simple tale of the gospel, all contrived and managed by the arch-fiend of everything good and holy, to tear from us the truth as it is in Jesus, I am amazed, I am overwhelmed, I must cry out, Lord, was it possible that the church could live? Yes; it was. Was not thy word, whose every syllable has been doubted, examined, distorted, denied, mocked, cursed, prohibited, was it not buried up in eternal oblivion, or torn in peacemeal and scattered to the four winds of heaven? No! no! The word and Church of Christ stand yet untouched, and while HE stands, they will. Though Herod be king on earth and Caiphas high-priest, Jesus is both king and high-priest in heaven! But while all this is going on, many a dejected Cleophas wandering to Emmaus with his fellow-sufferers, exclaims, “Ah! we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel!”

We proceed to our second topic, and then will they find their answer.

II. The road to Emmaus was a solitary one, especially at this time. Our pilgrims had ample opportunity to unbosom themselves freely. They were in no particular hurry; they walked along, now slower, now quicker, now they stop, then they proceed again, just

as men are apt to do who are engaged in an absorbing and affecting theme of conversation. By and by a solitary stranger overtakes them. They take him for a pilgrim from abroad, and his appearance was so prepossessing and lovely, that they proceed with their conversation, void of any apprehension of peril. The stranger, instead of passing on ahead of them, seems inclined to keep them company ; and after the usual salutation of peace, he addressed them in some such way as this : “ Men and brethren, I perceive your minds and hearts are deeply engaged in a serious though melancholy subject of conversation. I too feel interested in whatsoever concerns a higher and better world than this ; and the promises of God, the hope of Israel and the spiritual welfare of every soul under heaven, are subjects very near and dear to my heart. But I have not been able to gather any meaning or connection from your abrupt exclamations and remarks. What manner of communications, then, are these, that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad ? Those that fear the Lord speak often one to another, as the prophet says, and who knows what spiritual enjoyment and comfort a free, brotherly exchange of feeling and of divine knowledge, may yield us by the way.” Cleophas and his companion no sooner discern in this stranger a pious brother, than they unburden their hearts in the lively and affecting manner of our text, expecting, probably, many questions, and much of wonder and perplexity on the part of the foreigner. But what was their surprise, think you, when they perceived his sweet countenance overspreading with something of that same divine ease and

calmness, and his pensive eye glancing away, as it were, over the plains of heaven and eternity with that same profound and enrapturing intensity, which they used to think the exclusive characteristics of their deceased Rabbi of Nazareth. How strange, when he opened his lips to express his astonishment at nothing save their unbelief, and when, after the faithful and tender reproof, he commenced a course of divine instruction, which expanded their minds to a thousand new ideas, and poured a river of consolation and joy into their wounded hearts. “O, ye fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” What! have you forgotten that the woman’s seed, the Restorer of the fall, will not crush the serpent’s head without having his own heel crushed first? You know the universal law of conscience recognized by the sacrifices of Moses, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and the universal law of reason recognized by the repetition of those sacrifices, that the blood of beasts cannot take it away, — and do you draw no inference from this? Moses has told you, ‘Cursed is every one that abideth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;’ and again he has told you, ‘Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;’ and the Messiah is to redeem you from the curse of the broken law, and your lamented friend has been hanged on a tree, — and does not the grand and cheering inference meet you at the very threshold? What meaneth the brazen serpent which Moses raised for the healing of the people? Have you altogether forgotten

the opposition of the kings and princes of the earth to Jehovah, and to his Son, as it is described in the second Psalm, and the Messiah's sufferings in the twenty-second and the sixty-ninth Psalms, and the glory which was to follow ? But if all this has escaped your attention, how was it possible for you to overlook what Isaiah says of the small beginning of the Messiah's reign, of his sufferings, reproaches, and death, as the atonement for the sins of a world ; of the opposition of the Jews to their own Saviour, and of the previous salvation of the heathen world before Israel will return to God as a people, and look upon him whom they have pierced ? Are all your priests and scribes able to explain to you that portion of Isaiah which begins, " Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, etc." unless they admit that the Messiah is first to die for your sins, and then to rise and to reign forever ? They are not, nor will they ever be able. Is not the Messiah to be smitten as a shepherd, and his disciples to be scattered as sheep ? Is not ' the Messiah ' to be ' cut off, but not for himself,' ' to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the visions and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy,' his spiritual sanctuary, the church on earth, and prepare the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, for the reception of all his followers into never-ending rest and glory ?

Thus, only more at large and infinitely better, did our blessed Lord expound to the astonished pilgrims of Emmaus the law and the prophets, and indeed, " the whole counsel of God." And above all things, he in-

roduced them into the great secret of his kingdom, namely, that the way to glory for Christ himself, for his word, his doctrine, and his people, leads through Gethsemane, over Calvary, through the valley of the shadow of death, through shame and blame undeserved, through much weakness, tribulation, and fear. A secret which neither the world nor Satan will understand, though they hear it ringing in their ears from every truly Christian pulpit, until they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Such scenes have been repeated on a larger or smaller scale, innumerable times. It is but a few years since, that, in some Christian countries, unbelieving hirelings were obtruded by the civil arm upon a thousand congregations, to feed the poor people with the empty straw of moral essays, and with the apostate speculations of corrupt universities ; and to approach, in the midst of God's church and people, the throne of glory with senseless, heartless, printed mockeries, in the form of prayers and liturgies. Strict attendance to divine worship was ordered, and every kind and degree of methodism and mysticism, i. e., all social prayer-meetings, and Bible-reading, and pious conversation, severely forbidden. Many were doomed to prison, many were beaten, many who could fly, fled. In another country, which then professed great attachment to vital godliness, the proceedings of the Bible society were stopped at once ; pious ministers were exiled, unheard and uncondemned, and the people were left like sheep without a shepherd. And I have seen the effects with my eyes, and heard them with my ears. O, what pale

faces! O, what sighs, doubts, and fears! “We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel!” But to these, and all in similar distress, we can only say, “O, (ye) fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” Come, open your blessed Bible, read its pages, and in the light thereof, view once more the changing scenes of this world; and you will soon perceive a mutual agreement and a symmetry which abundantly demonstrate the presence of a divine hand in either case. Why is Abel slain, and Cain permitted to live? Why is Enoch, whose pious influence was so much needed, taken away, while Nimrod builds cities and towers, and plants kingdoms, and tyrannizes over the world? Why is Abraham a wanderer and stranger, while the Canaanite possesses and defiles the land of promise? Why must Jacob flee, and Esau remain in the paternal house? Why is David a fugitive in the earth, while the reprobated Saul possesses the kingdom? Why must Jonathan, the noble, pious prince, fall in battle, and Ishbosheth live to trouble David, and by his ambition to occasion the slaughter of thousands? Why are the prophets of Jehovah killed by Jezebel, like sheep, and the priests of Baal and Ashtaroth live and riot upon the sweat of the poor, and corrupt the ignorant? Why must Elijah, who had been very jealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, make his escape like a thief, and Jezebel remain on her throne, to reestablish the impure worship of Jupiter, and of Venus? Why must the infant Jesus flee to Egypt, and Herod sit quietly in Jerusalem? And why were the holy prophets constantly

“persecuted and slain,” and why did the apostles die the death of martyrs, and Stephen with them, and multitudes of others? Why? The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, and the disciple is not above his master, nor servant above his lord. This is the straight and narrow path which leadeth unto life, and there is none other. But be of good cheer, you who suffer for righteousness’ sake, — your path leads unto life. Though Herod be king on earth, and Caiphas be high-priest, Jesus is both King and high-priest in heaven.

III. But we must hasten to return to our travellers, for they are already drawing near to Emmaus.

While the dear stranger uttered his “gracious words,” Cleophas and his companion observed the most profound and respectful silence. They listened as to words of eternal life; and indeed that they would have been, had they been accompanied by no higher gift. But when Jesus speaks, he speaks more than words. While speaking, he communicated to their minds that heavenly unction, without which no true knowledge of divine things ever existed. He opened their minds, that they understood the Scriptures. They were distinctly conscious of this fact, though their attention was not called to it until “he vanished out of their sight.” “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” That I interpret this passage rightly, you may see from a comparison of v. 45, where it is said in reference to the apostles, “Then opened he (Christ) their understanding, that

they might understand the Scriptures. Here, the meaning cannot be restricted to mere verbal expositions of Scripture passages; for that privilege, the apostles had enjoyed for some three years, and still, their understanding was most evidently not "opened." On this important subject I shall have more to say, when, Providence permitting, we shall come to a consideration of the passage just quoted. Here it may suffice to observe, that the thing spoken of in either passage is that divine illumination of the mind by which the spiritual meaning, beauty and power of divine truth is revealed to the quickened and sanctified apprehension of man. This divine light is the exclusive privilege of the renewed heart; and is common to all the children of God. It is distinct from the spirit of inspiration afterwards communicated to the apostles, as we shall see on that future opportunity already alluded to. It is distinct also from the oral instruction of Christ. Hundreds of times he had given oral instruction to thousands; but it is nowhere said that he opened the understanding of the people or even of the apostles; nor did they in reality ever understand him wholly. Here, this gift is first mentioned; it is mentioned distinct from the oral instructions themselves, and therefore differs from them, if the evangelist spoke sense.

O that I could now dip my pen in the river of life, or in the crystal sea, or in the rainbow around the throne of God, to portray, in all its supernatural beauty, the wondrous moment when the heavy scales from sin and gross sense drop from the eyes of the repenting sinner, and the realities of the kingdom of heaven are revealed to him through the mirror

of the divine Word ! Men and brethren, it is no vision, no dream, no morbid state of mind. It is sound, wakeful reality ; and the mind which experiences what I say, is calm as the breathless ocean and clear as a sunbeam, and is the new-created star of Bethlehem. On the contrary, the common frame of mind, in which we are by nature, appears then comparatively like a distressing, feverish dream, like a strange delirium, or stupor, to which we look back with terror and amazement.

If you permit me an imperfect comparison, I should liken a man whose mind becomes enlightened on divine subjects, to a lost traveller groping through the blackness of night, amid the howling of a storm and the pelting rain. The country is unknown to him, and perilous ; and he feels carefully his uncertain and slippery way with his staff, to avoid the precipices which surround him. O how he wishes for the day ! At last, the east begins to dawn ; he can select his steps ; his path seems to lie on an eminence, but the valley beneath and the horizon around are still wrapt in a thick, impenetrable fog. As yet, all is dreariness and chill, and heaven and earth seem to be in sackcloth. By and by, the golden sun rises, and

“ Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave.”

The gilded mountain tops proclaim a clear and cheerful day ; the rays of the sun pierce the vapors in a

thousand directions ; cloud after cloud takes wing, and speeds away, till they leave to our traveller the wonderful spectacle of a boundless landscape, set with all the jewelry of the morning dew, and glowing with the purity and the freshness of paradise as far and wide as the eye can reach. But what have we been about ? Has our “parable” done at all justice to its subject ? Can a mere *shadow* do justice to *reality* ? Verily, I am tired myself of words and comparisons so unfit for my purpose. O that I could open the eyes of those here who do not understand me, to see my meaning. How astonished would they be, and how would we all rejoice together in the blessed contemplation and prospect of a better world ! But to give you that illumination of mind, is the prerogative of Jesus ; and to him must I commend your case. Remember this—you know not what your Bible is ; you never will know it till you seek and find the light of heaven.

IV. We hasten to the close.

Our pilgrims have now arrived at Emmaus. They stand before the door of that pious family where the two disciples intended to put up for the night. The stranger wants to proceed ; but they urge him to remain. “Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.” How can we, dearest brother, part with thee so soon ? Our hearts long to be filled with thy blessed company, pious stranger ; and then, it is evening, and the night comes apace, and we should

love so much to make thee comfortable here. Abide with us, dearest one, and if thou wilt condescend to teach us still farther, we will listen to thee, and pray and hope and rejoice with thee till the rising sun, and then thou shalt depart in peace. Therefore, "abide with us." The stranger yields, and they enter in. Soon the frugal supper is prepared, and they sit down to the meal. The dignified stranger assumes the place and office of the host, and the two travellers cheerfully and respectfully yield to him that privilege. He takes the bread and looks up; they look on with amazement; — "what a look is this! what a glance into the third heaven! is this our dear — no, impossible!" — He gives thanks, — and they are ready to sink to the ground with wonder, fear, and joy. — "It is his voice — it is his voice!" Now their eyes are opened. "Yes, these are his very looks, — and we knew him not, the dearest master!" They rise to clasp him in their arms; but he vanishes out of their sight. To paint their surprise and their feelings, would be a vain endeavor. Their hearts overflow with joy. The supper remains untouched on the table; and, late as it is, they go, yea, they *run* back to Jerusalem, to bring word to the eleven. Breathless, they burst into the room. They find them in one place assembled, and as they enter, it echoes from every side, "the Lord has risen, and has appeared to Simon." "Yea, and to us too," they reply, and relate the whole of the event, interrupting one another in their haste.

"Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked

with us ? ” Indeed, and well might they. Divine knowledge gives divine joy. The man whose religion consists in cold speculation and a cheerless orthodoxy, is a starving, perishing soul. But that man who feels his sins forgiven and his iniquities pardoned, who knows his name written in heaven and his peace made with God, that man’s heart *burns*. Away he flies to seek like-feeling souls, that may help his inexperienced voice to strike up a joyful psalm of gratitude and love. “ Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” Taught by the unction of which we spoke, he knows, he *feels* what the unbelieving scholar’s eye, or ear, or heart never experienced; he feels the meaning of the sacred poet, when he sings, “ My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the *winter is past, the rain is over, and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.* Already the fig-tree embalmeth her fruit, and the budding vines smell sweetly. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. O thou, *my dove in the clefts of the rocks and in the hiding-places of the rough precipice !* Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Take us the foxes, the little foxes which destroy the vineyard ; for our vineyards are all one blossom. It is enough that my beloved is mine, and I am his, — his, who feedeth among the lilies. At the evening breeze, O my friend, and when the stretching shadows flee away, then return thou unto me, like a roe or a young hart over the dividing

hills." And let no profane and worldly-minded sage check or mock the sacred overflowings of the newborn soul ; or let him first take away the soothing, healing power of the balm of Gilead and destroy the consolations of the cross of Christ, the soul-stirring energies of eternal truth, and the powers of the world to come. Let him not dare to stretch beyond his *line*, (short, alas, it is !) nor judge of things which he never felt. As well might you prevent the birds from singing, and the lilies from blossoming when the genial powers of spring move in the bosom of the earth. Are there any of my readers, whose hearts never *burnt* as HE spoke unto them and as HE opened to them the scriptures ? Your case is one which calls for tender pity ; your life is not worth having ; and if you die as you lived, your existence is a curse. But your case is one, too, which calls for unsparing reproof. Our disciples, as they walked along, "talked together of all these things which had happened" at Jerusalem, — and then "*Jesus himself drew near and went with them.*" But of what have you talked by the way, thus far ; of what are you talking ? Give now, I pray you, glory to the Lord and make confession unto him : have you not talked about anything but Christ and his cross ? Of fashions, amusements, of politics and literature, at best, you converse ; and is religion not worth one of your moments ? Say now, what would be your feelings if some Christian friend should endeavor to talk with you faithfully on the subject of religion ? You know it, and I know it too ; but do you think that thus Jesus himself will ever draw near to you and walk with you ? Never !

But you, who know the love of Christ, let us close this meditation by joining with one consent in the petition of our two pilgrim brethren. Lord ! “abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” Some of us have passed the meridian of life, and our evening may soon draw near. When our sun sets and our eyes grow dim, when the night of death surrounds us, and every earthly comfort fails, — O, then “abide with us !” When we can no more read thy Word, when our tongues can no more talk of all these things, nor our ears perceive the voice of prayer and Christian consolation and sympathy, — O, then “abide with us !” Or if the sun of every earthly comfort must set upon us, if contempt, or poverty, or nakedness, or hunger, or persecution, or peril by land and sea, or the solitude of a long and painful sick bed must ever try our faith and obedience, and no Christian brother can stand by us, — O, then “abide *thou* with us.” Let us but hear thy voice, saying, It is I, fear not ; and we will not fear, not murmur. Or if we must long sojourn in Mesech and dwell in the tents of Kedar ; if our souls must long dwell with them that hate peace, far, far away, at a hopeless distance, from the earthly sanctuary of our God where our friends and kindred dwell ; — O, then “abide with us,” for it is evening with us — it is evening ; our best years are gone by, and our day is far spent. When none will walk with us, then draw thou near. When none will speak with us, then speak thou unto us words of life and joy ; come in and tarry with us, and bless and break unto us the bread of life. If thou be with us, we will be content while we live. We

will remember that our life is but a hasty pilgrimage, but three score furlongs, but a vapor which appeareth for a little while, a shadow, a short and foolish dream; but that

“ There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign,”

and where we shall see THEE whom our soul loveth, and all thy people, forever. Amen.

MEDITATIONS.

XII.

THE GREAT EVENING.

LUKE XXIV, 36—48; JOHN XX, 19—23.

And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoveth Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things.

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he

and so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you : as my father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

NOTHING would be more imperfect and inadequate, than to suppose the various appearances of our Lord, after his resurrection, were intended merely to convince his disciples and other followers of his being risen from the dead. Such a view would confine us to the mere fraction of a plan, deep-cast, penetrating both the minds of men and the veil of futurity, beyond everything predicable of a *man's* contrivance in the exercise of his most unusual powers. We must keep in mind, that when *we* hear of the resurrection of Christ, a very different idea is conveyed to *our* minds, if we possess at all a knowledge of the sacred scriptures, from that which the disciples could have derived from such tidings. *They* had no New Testament in their hands ; no eighteen Christian centuries behind them, to unlock unto them the profound signification of their Lord's resurrection. He is risen from the dead ! Joyful news ! But the first idea which must have struck them, is : well, Lazarus also was raised from the dead, and several others in past times. But, of course they rose again merely to live a few years longer, and then to die again and sleep with their fathers. Is the resurrection of our Lord like unto theirs ? And why should it not ? He will live with us ; he will teach us a few years more ; he will perhaps, after all, establish some earthly kingdom, and on his ultimate peaceful and honorable exit from this

world, will leave Israel, and perhaps the whole world, in that condition of perfect piety, peace, and prosperity, for which we are sighing. How inadequate this, though much improved, conception would have been, and how unlike to the transcendingly spiritual plan of Christ, needs no mention. Or, they might have thought, some of the saints too, which slept, have risen and “appeared unto many,” and so is he also risen, and they will go to heaven together, and we shall by and by follow them and be forever happy with them ; and this is all which he means by his appearing unto us. Comfortable indeed would this idea have been, but still how short of the whole reality before us, is obvious again. They needed to be taught, not merely that *he was risen from the dead*, but also that his existence was, though really *bodily*, yet so spiritual at the same time, and so divinely independent as to be calculated for a rational and moral foundation upon which was to be reared the great doctrine of the spiritual, yet real, communion and intercourse which he held with the apostles and still holds with every believer to the ends of the earth, and to the utmost limits of time : an intercourse, you remember, which no glorified saint in heaven can hold with you, and infinitely less with all believers over the world. With the whole mature and profound conception and conviction of this his elevated existence after his resurrection, there stood necessarily and closely connected the whole nature of his future plans, his kingdom, the means of its promotion, the certainty of its success, the spiritual interests of each Christian personally in time and eternity, and the great question of a glorious resurrection of the just :

a subject, of whose close connection with and dependence upon the resurrection of Christ, the apostle speaks in 1 Cor. xv. 12 — 18. Of these all-important, but at that time altogether novel subjects, the disciples were to conceive as well as we, and to believe them. But, more than this, they were to teach, defend, prove, enforce them before high and low, to fill the world with them, and to die in attestation of their reality and importance. Their conviction was to become in part the ground of the conviction of generations to come. The church was to be reared upon it. What depth, then, what satisfactory fullness, what unquestionable sobriety and reality must have characterized their conviction of all this, if *they* were to perform the task, and *we* to rest upon it with an ease and assurance sufficient to hold out in the trying hour of death ! I know that HE might have made them fit preachers of the gospel, in all respects, in the twinkling of an eye, by a touch of creative power ; and so might he have fitted stones and might fit them now for the purpose ; but just as he *now* chooses to cause divine truth to flow from the lips of him who *felt* it, and not from an unconscious machinery of wheels and springs ; just as he *now* chooses that face should speak to face, eye beam upon eye, that the living voice of man should roll on and carry thrilling conviction, not from *stone* to heart, but from heart to heart, and light and life, not from matter to mind, but from mind to mind, and the undying spark of divine love from bosom to bosom ; so did he *then* choose that the sensitive experience, the intellectual conviction, and the moral sensibilities of man should be the ground upon

which was to rest the great truth of a divine Savior from sin and ruin ; so that while there remaineth yet on earth the absolutely necessary principle of civil justice and common intercourse — I mean human experience and testimony — while there is yet a spark of sound intellect burning under heaven, and an unbroken cord of moral sensibilities, there shall also not be wanting on earth believers in Jesus, till he shall come to judge the world in righteousness.

But if the disciples were to attain to such conceptions, to gather such a conviction, to prepare for a work so great, opportunities were to be afforded, assistance was to be granted, stumbling-blocks to be removed from their way, the senses touched, reason convinced, and the sensibilities of their hearts tuned and disposed. All this was done to perfection during the forty days from Christ's resurrection to his ascension, and with an adaptation of means and a wise economy altogether worthy of him whose work the whole is.

The parts into which I shall divide this discourse, will neither be exhausted nor relinquished to-day. The subsequent appearances of Christ will throw still farther light upon them. Yet, that we may have some definite aim in our remarks and be enabled to remember them the better, I propose the following arrangement :

I. What impression did our Lord wish to leave on the minds of his disciples, upon the subject of his existence ?

II. How did he remove the moral hindrances of

their rising to the new and high idea, which he was to communicate to them ?

III. How did he convince their senses ? and

IV. How their understanding ?

I. The first impression to be made on the minds of the disciples, was, that the resurrection of Christ was an entirely different one from that of the widow's son at Nain, and from that of Lazarus. Such a resurrection, such a state of existence, altogether a common, material, mortal one, would of course have led them to suppose that Christ would resume his office as a teacher, a rabbi ; would have confirmed them in the belief, and justly, that he intended, after all, to organize an earthly kingdom, whatever spiritual conceptions they might have strove to entertain respecting it ; and would have necessarily disqualified them for the charge they were about to receive. New conversations, new discourses, reproofs and alterations in the temple, new journeys about the country, new external, material cures, new merely sensitive miracles and wonders ; all this, and much more, would have been identified with his return, though miraculous, to the same bodily existence as before ; and instead of raising their conceptions higher, instead of exercising their faith, and awakening their intellect : instead of spiritualizing and ennobling their attachment to him, and their ideas of his character, and their motives, and desires at large, and instead of preparing them for the proclamation of an entirely spiritual kingdom, the coarser idea of an external theocracy would have been justified and deepened, and their dependence upon the bodily presence, and the

oral instructions of their Lord confirmed ; while the operations, the light, the diverse, quickening, enlarging, purifying influences of the divine Spirit, and all "the power of the world to come" would have remained unknown to them, because their value and necessity could never have been felt. This is obvious. "It is expedient for you," said Christ, a short time before his sufferings, "that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." If the dispensation of symbols and shadows, of external laws and precepts, of earthly promises and threatenings, of temporal rewards and punishments, was to give room to a spiritual dispensation, with the divine law written on men's hearts, and not upon tablets of stone ; if promises and threatenings, rewards and punishments, were to become all spiritual, eternal ; if the high-priest and king of the new dispensation, the dispenser of its blessings, and executor of its comminations was to become accessible, not to the inhabitants of Judea merely, but to every sinner under heaven, not to one generation of men, but to every generation to the end of time : then it is plain that, if indeed he begun his career as an humble rabbi, an inspired prophet on earth, he must, at some period, wing his way to a state of existence, to a degree of dignity and power, corresponding to his offices and to his relation to the spiritual and everlasting kingdom in question. His dispensation could rise only with him. If the saving principle of this dispensation was to be faith, and not works, (and works can never save!) if faith in him (and Scripture passages without number almost can be adduced to establish this) if this faith in

him was first to be grounded upon rational evidence, and ultimately upon experience, not sensitive, but spiritual : then his material presence must have been withdrawn, his existence must have become one of omnipresence, and the evidence of unsuspicious testimony, so far as the nature of the case can admit of it, must be provided. His omnipresence is a matter of spiritual experience with every believer ; the unsuspicious testimony was the chief care of our Lord after his resurrection, as we shall see. During the remarkable day, whose last scene we are now contemplating, a beginning only could be made of this, and hence, as I have already intimated, this topic cannot be finished to-day, but will be pursued hereafter.

Let us see how our Lord began this great work. Already in his appearance to Mary, we meet with the remarkable circumstance that she did not recognize her beloved master, though she saw his form, and heard his voice. That she equally mistook the angels in the sepulchre for Joseph's men, is not so strange, because she had, of course, never seen them before, and their appearance seems to have been simply that of a couple of young men. But Christ she knew, she sought : and yet she did not know him, till he made himself known. Considering, however, her state of mind, I should not insist upon this circumstance alone, if it did not recur time and again, and under circumstances which render it still more surprising. In the afternoon, two disciples and intimate friends of Christ go to Emmaus ; he appears to them, — he conversed with them : he astonished them with his profound knowledge of divine things : they had already

heard of Christ's resurrection, they were in no peculiar excitement of mind, they conceive a particular attachment to him, inviting him to abide with them ; in short, they hear him, they listen to him with attention, they see him, they look at him with searching interest, no doubt, and all this probably for more than an hour ; and yet they do not know him, nor recognize at all either his features or his voice, until he makes himself known. Similar instances will recur hereafter. Different were the cases of the youth of Nain and of Lazarus ; everybody knew them after their resurrection, we should conclude. Again : He is no sooner recognized by the two pilgrims, when he vanishes out of sight, or literally, " He becomes invisible." Some would make us believe that this passage merely meant he quickly retired from them, so that they saw him no more. But this is not only forcing the word *αφαντος*, invisible, but it also jars against the whole tenor of the history of Christ's resurrection. A little before, or after, the scene of Emmaus, Christ appeared to Peter ; and this apostle, in his usual ardor, immediately calls the eleven together, and communicates to them the fact. While they sit, some doubting, some wondering and rejoicing, the two pilgrims arrive, and tell their tidings of joy. Their testimony, too, receives but partial credence ; i. e. some doubted still, and while they are yet comparing facts, and talking to each other, then, when the doors were shut (John) where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, " came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, 'Peace be unto you !' " How did he come ? Some say he knocked at the door, and they

opened to him ; others, and those well-disposed men, say, he opened the door by his miraculous power, for (and this is what both parties urge, and it is all they urge) it is not said, he came through the locked up doors, but simply he came while the doors were shut. What an unworthy play with serious words ! How can a man be said to come in while the doors are shut, when these doors are actually opened to him, be it by natural or supernatural power ? Can a door be called *shut* when it is *opened* ? So should we come in, the doors being shut, if there be any doors in a house, for they are shut, and often locked when we come. But the fact is, when a locked door is unlocked, then we pass through the door, it being open, and not shut. Why the apostle did not say he came through the locked doors, is obvious. He did not know at all which way he came. *He came*, and this is all the evangelist knows and all he says about his coming ; but he knows, also, and he says it, too, that when Christ came, the doors were shut, and not open. Moreover, the disciples “ were affrighted and terrified, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.” How was this possible, or at least, natural, if there was not something in the *manner* of his appearing, which led them into that mistake ! But what could that have been ? That Christ was risen, they knew and believed ; he was able, long before his resurrection, to open doors that were locked, and they were abundantly used to see him perform such works, on proper occasions. But his coming in when the doors were shut, this was something new, surprising to them, something which led them to think that what they saw was, at all events,

not flesh and bones. Again : Christ appeared to the women, and how did he know where they were, and walked ? How did he know the two disciples are taking a walk to Emmaus, and are going to talk “ of all these things ? ” How did he find Peter alone ? How did he know the apostles are now assembled in their private room ? Not indeed by an espionage most unworthy of him ; and who could have been his spy ? The following impressions must, therefore, have been made on the disciples’ minds, though tacitly : His existence is one of whose laws we have no conception ; where he chooses to be, there he is ; what we do, and think, and purpose, he knows ; and the laws of matter have no power over him. And what was the most natural consequence of this impression, took place, — they supposed he had no body at all, but was pure spirit. But this was not the conclusion he wished them to draw. He had promised to rise from the dead, and this meant, doubtless, that his body should rise ? for spirits are neither buried, nor do they die, nor do they rise from the dead. This is obvious. Hence it was important that they should know his body is risen, though the mode of its existence be inconceivable ; and he gives them all the evidence of the great fact which the nature of the case admits of. They see him, they hear him, they touch him : the evidence of three senses is afforded. He eats before them, they can resist no longer, they believe, yea, they know and are convinced he is in very deed risen from the dead, whatsoever of the marvellous and inconceivable may be connected with this fact,

II. Whenever objects visible are not discerned, the difficulty is not in the *objects*, but in the eye. When the thrill of sweet harmony does not ravish, or the grating jar distress us, the sound was just what it was ; but our ears are dull of hearing, or uncultivated. Mathematical truth is just as true as ever it was, though it may appear nonsense to a whole country, or world. How much more, then, must divine truth be the same, and blameless, though she be unheard, unfelt forever by you or me. The cause why so many misapprehensions and errors prevail in this world, is that there are infinite degrees of capacity, infinitely divers likings, preferences, prejudices, etc. in men. The things that are, are, of course, the same to all, if all could or would see and perceive alike. The various causes adduced by Bacon, which influence and misguide our mind in reference to intellectual matters, are so many and so powerful, that the view of them is perfectly appalling, and it requires a deep sense of the preciousness of truth, and a strong desire to possess it, if a man is still to engage in the seemingly hopeless pursuit. But the dire dilemma is before him. Think, meditate, or be a brute, — fight or die, — and he presses on. But what hindrances, do you think, must exist in reference to things spiritual, religious, and higher than the heavens, especially to a fallen, blind, distracted worm, like man. But the still dire dilemma is before him. Think, meditate, seek the light of heaven, or perish, fight or die the second death. A few only of these causes of error we can notice here, as having existed in the disciples, and we shall see how Christ removed them,

They had, from infancy, imbibed a set of notions about the Messiah and his kingdom, through which, as through colored glasses, they looked upon every passage of holy writ, and upon every parable and sentiment which their master uttered in their hearing. Not that he did not succeed in improving and ennobling their conceptions, in removing some of the grosser errors, and in instilling such positive truths into their minds, as they were able and willing to bear. He certainly did. But their old set of notions needed to be plucked up by the roots, and this was hard, and required time and means, unless they were to be handled like stones, which God never intended that they should. Christ improved, removed, replaced their notions on the subject of his person, character, and kingdom, during the three years of his sojourning with them, so far as they were willing, and almost beyond what they were willing, as those instances of reproof to Peter, Philip, and several times to all of them, evidently show. Time forbids to cite the passages which I hope are familiar to you all. The remainder of their system to which they clung with a blind temerity which yielded to no verbal instructions—that was exploded when their master expired on the cross, and when his lifeless corpse was deposited in the silent grave. O, now it was gone, the golden dream! It was gone! The whole stupendous framework of their longed-for theocracy was ground to dust. The spark of their own kindling was crushed, and who would kindle it again! How long they had been feeding upon ashes, and building castles in the air! There they stood, at their wits' end; and if heaven and earth

had forsaken them, they could not have felt more desolate, empty, and deserted. A hard moral case ! but an indispensable one, too. While a vessel is full, you can put nothing into it ; but when it is emptied of its contents, then it may become the receptacle of wine, or precious ointment. So they. For three years, Christ had labored with them ; but little was accomplished. But what they were unwilling to relinquish, the merciful, omnipotent hand of God tore away from them, resistlessly and forever. Now, at last, they were as little children, ready to be filled with divine knowledge. The hard cure was rendered necessary by their stubbornness ; but it was a cure still, and God was the physician.

There is not a man or woman among my readers, who has not, or had not, a preconceived system of error on the subject of religion. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. The idiot alone has none, or has it but rarely. Some of you may think that in some way or other, all men will be saved ; some, that all moral men (but I should like to have you draw the line, if you can !) shall escape ruin ; some may have taken up a dead orthodoxy as the way of salvation ; some a dead philosophy framed by yourselves, or made ready to your hands by others. Whatsoever it may be, depend upon it, if you have not the truth, i. e., Christ crucified, crucified for you, and living in you, if you have not the truth, then you have “ a lie in your right hand ” and in your hearts, for you are sure to have some notion about you, be it what it may. Time forbids me to impugn and expose all these errors. I can only pray that the omnipotent hand of God may

tear them from you ; that a blast from the Almighty may carry away, merciless, your universalism or your moralism, or your dead orthodoxy, or your dead philosophy, or whatsoever may be the perishing foundation of your delusive hopes and the treacherous pillow of your alarming slumber. O, that we might see the blessed time when we could all come here poor, rid of every old, cherished error, ignorant, empty, teachable as little children ! How soon would Christ step in among us, though our doors were shut tight and our houses surrounded by a thousand spies and foes, — and would say to us all, “Peace be unto you.” O, how soon ! But while you are full of your errors, whatsoever they may be, I ask, and you answer me now honestly, how can you expect to receive the truth, or to be filled with all the fullness of God ? It is impossible, it is inconceivable, it is hopeless, while the laws of your minds remain as they are.

2. Want of thought, retirement, reflection, and meditation, before God, was another difficulty of the disciples. With the exception of Nathaniel and John, I am not able to discover in either of them any traces of deeper, *habitual* meditation, during the three years of Christ’s intercourse with them. Christ, you remember, led them into the wilderness once, and probably as often as they would follow, but generally they suffered him to retire alone and kept about the people, about their external duties. An honest and single-hearted performance of external religious duties, general serious-mindedness, openness to truth to some extent, a desire for better times, and better hearts, and a very lovely and praise-worthy attachment to

their dear master, is all that I can discover throughout the four gospels. How often did they question him privately about the most easy parables and sentiments, and what they meant ! And Christ reproved them on these occasions several times, for their want of reflection.

Little time as I have for digressions in the present discourse, I cannot let this opportunity pass by, without pointing my hearers to that thing diffused as the atmosphere, which brings a blot both upon the heart and intellect of men, and works the effectual ruin of the mass of sinners, — I mean, *thoughtlessness on divine subjects*. How many a great man has reflected on almost every imaginable subject, save religion ! Napoleon dies with the groan, “France in arms !” and Nelson, rejoicing in the dreadful victory of Trafalgar, yields up his responsible spirit with the sigh, “Bless God, I have done my duty !” Others, filled to the brim with earthborn knowledge, die without the knowledge of Christ. But what is “France in arms !” before the judge of all the earth ? Or the laws of the Olympian games and the Constitution of Great Britain, are they the law of heaven ? They are not. Look now at the mechanic, the merchant, the scholar, the politician, the soldier, the sailor ! Tell me, how many of them are in the *habit of a prayerful contemplation of eternity*, or care half as much for the knowledge of God as for skill in their trade. They rise up, they go to eating, to work, to reading, to meals again, to rest, to diversions and walks, to evening parties, and to sleep. It is one rolling chain of worldly pursuits and indul-

gences, from year to year, till death comes and closes the accounts ; their thoughts are anywhere but in their closets ; away they go, like the fool's eyes, to the ends of the earth. O, what a low, mean, daring, alarming wallowing in the mire of this world ! Lift up your countenance, immortal man ! There is a God in heaven, and you are living for eternity ! Lift it up ! lest you perish in the deep, polluting mire. Why will you perish under the open window of heaven ? But let me ask you here, for I am preaching to you, and not to the people in China, and answer me now before God, the searcher of hearts, where is your hour of contemplation, and when do you shut out the world from your solitary closet, to soar up to the footsteps of the judgment-seat and to the threshold of heaven, or to descend to the gates of hell, to rouse your slumbering soul to a sense of your stupendous responsibility ? Where is it, that hour, that eventful one, out of the twenty-four ?

Far be it from me to charge the disciples of Christ with that kind and degree of inconsideration which I have just been reproving. No. Still there was something like it in them, and sufficient of it, too, to throw a thick veil over the kingdom and plan of Christ. Christ removed it by driving them to their closets, and to solitude. Since Thursday evening, they were scattered, hidden, forsaken, alone. There was time for reflection and thought ; and many a thoughtful, tearful look they may have sent up to heaven. There is a deeper tone of thought perceptible among them throughout, from the two pilgrims to John and Peter. They are stiller, more tender, more pensive, and

everyway more fit for the higher ideal of the kingdom of Christ. "Go ye, and do likewise!"

3. These, and many other circumstances, rendered them insensible of their need of divine light, to understand divine subjects. Thus, to the present day, "the deep things of God" necessarily remain involved, to every unconverted man, in that haze which makes them foolishness, till the light of heaven beams upon his soul. Their case and ours, in the same frame of mind, are alike. But now, their minds being prepared for the reception of a higher illumination, Christ removes the darkness from their minds by opening "their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures," as he had done to the two disciples walking to Emmaus.

III. Upon our third topic, we have already touched incidentally. After the testimony of Peter, and of Cleophas and his companion, most of them could no more doubt the fact that the Lord was risen. By the mouth of two, and of three witnesses, this matter was properly established, seeing the witnesses were in their right minds, and had no interest in telling a falsehood; i. e. they were obviously able and willing to tell the truth. More than this no bar of justice can demand, nor does demand at present. But (for purposes which will become clear to us before closing this meditation) Jesus had concluded to show himself to them all, *this very evening*. The *manner* of his appearing, you know. This was, however, calculated, while it convinced them still farther of the exalted nature of his existence, to throw them into doubts as to the real resurrection of

his body. These new doubts were overcome by new and accumulated proofs of his real bodily resurrection from the dead; i. e., of his resurrection itself, for there is no resurrection conceivable, save that of bodies. He showed unto them his hands, his feet, and his side, to convince them of two facts at a time : 1, that he had flesh and bones, that he was no mere spirit, and 2, that what they saw and handled, was his own body, the same one which had been crucified three days ago, and thrust through with the spear of a Roman soldier.

Joy now filled their hearts. But the idea to have him again was so great, so unexpected a one, that they could, on that very account, hardly believe even their senses. Calmly he asks for some meat, sits down and eats before them all. Now joy and conviction unite, and they gather around him to enjoy the blessed privilege of his presence.

IV. The evidence of sense, however, loses of its power in proportion to the perturbation of mind, and the excitement of feeling in those who are to bear witness, i. e. in proportion to the witnesses to be heard were deprived of the calm use of their understanding and cool judgment, at the time when they pretended to have been witnesses of the facts to be attested. The good sense of the apostles and the other disciples led them to recognize, themselves, this principle, during the scenes of the day. Angels had appeared to the women, and Christ had appeared to them, and both had given them charges and messages to the disciples, and the brethren of our Lord ; but still they doubted,

their minds remained suspended. This they carried rather too far, and some seem to have altogether rejected the testimony of the pious sisters, which they ought not to have done. But they erred on the safe side in this instance, and their fault was kindly re-proved and forgiven. Let us now review the events of this day in reference to our present topic; that we may get a full impression of the harmony and wisdom of its plan. Everywhere the evidence of sense mingled with moral instruction, wakening thought, and self-examination, and calling into exercise every faculty of mind and heart, and all this mingled in divers proportions according to the various exigences of the respective cases.

In the morning, the slumbering hopes of the whole band of disciples, believers and inquirers, were waked by a moral shock. Women were at the sepulchre, saw angels, saw the Lord, and are bringing tidings from both. Peter and John run there, but see nothing. All this had its obvious and wise purpose. The women receive the first sensible demonstration of the Lord's resurrection — and who would not be glad to grant that support to their distressed hearts and their comparatively feeble intellect. Still, where angels appear, a wise economy is practised, and a worthy purpose is perceptible. They have an important charge to deliver. The charge of the angels is important, yet it keeps within bounds, does not supercede what the Lord himself has to say, and the words are few, and few as they are, they are still calculated and intended to awaken a train of useful and sacred reflections in the hearts even of the women. The appearance of

Christ to Mary we have too fully handled already, to say much more. Only let it be remembered that the flow of her feelings was wisely checked, and thoughts of the most elevated nature were touched like the chords of a harp. All this was sufficient for the females: for they were never intended to become public witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and their meeting him is nowhere adduced as a proof of his having risen from the dead. But the disciples, on the contrary, who, being the appointed witnesses of this great fact, were intended to be profoundly convinced, are in the meantime left to reflection and consultation, and their minds, you may easily imagine, were powerfully exercised all the day long. How could they help comparing Scripture, and recalling our Lord's sayings? how should they not have kneeled down together and prayed for light from heaven? But all remained still and breathless till evening. The first excitement passes away; their feelings settle towards evening rather into the apprehension that all may be the effect of imagination. True, neither Joseph of Arimathea, nor anybody else knew where the body had been carried, and that this was passing strange could not be denied. Two men travel to Emmaus; Christ appears to them, purposely concealing himself until their minds are enlightened, their thoughts awakened, and their understanding stored with divine knowledge: then their eyes are opened, and he vanishes out of sight. As the evening sets in, another electric shock wakes the disciples, and in a few minutes they are assembled in their private room, the doors shut. The Lord hath appeared unto Peter — Peter, the sound, affectionate man! The

matter is discussed. Peter assures them of the fact, and relates the circumstances. Some believe and rejoice, some doubt. It is already getting somewhat late, when somebody knocks at the door hastily. "Who is it? who is there?" "We are here, Cleophas is here," they whisper without. "Why, we thought you gone to Emmaus." "No matter; open the door, we bring good and glorious news." To apprehend their tidings was not difficult. But those who believed Peter, exclaim, as they enter, "The Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Peter." They sit down, and, half out of breath, tell their story. New astonishment, new discussion, new rejoicings, new doubts. The doors are shut again, of course. All at once, Christ stands in the midst of them. "Peace be unto you!" Though much surprised by the extraordinary manner of his appearing, they are now sufficiently prepared for such a scene to remain masters of themselves. The gentle rebuke of Christ, of which Mark speaks, (xvi. 14) makes them ashamed of their obstinate doubts; his plain appearance, his accustomed affectionate address, his calmness removes every remainder of excitement, and they are now perfectly able to judge of what they see, and hear, and handle. They see the print of the nails, the scar made by the spear, they feel flesh and bones, they hear the accustomed voice; he eats of their food, and when all perturbation has subsided, he gathers them around him in the way he was wont to do; and while he expounds unto them the Scriptures, from Moses and onward, they feel themselves filled with heavenly comfort; new views burst upon them, new feelings flow from heart to heart. All is ease and

peace, calmness and undying reality about them ; and a conviction resting upon external and internal experience is settling deeply in their minds ; for which they may well have been ready to lay down their lives. Exciting reports opened the day ; reflection and consultation succeeded ; accumulating and more unquestionable testimony came in the evening ; the evidence of sense followed, calm instruction and a retrospect upon the life and the predictions of Christ, and upon the law and the prophets, closed the day ; and everything was shining in the substantial light of a better world, free from the refractions of the fallen reason and the corrupt heart of the natural man. If ever sober and unquestionable experience substantiated a fact, it is the fact before us. But of all this, more hereafter.

Christ prepares to take his leave for this time. One thing remained to be done. The moral distance between him and them seems so immense now, that they doubt whether they may hope to sustain to their exalted master the intimate relation of apostles any longer. Yes, they may, they shall. "Peace be unto you," says Jesus to them again, before parting, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." Then breathing upon them, he saith : "Receive the Holy Spirit, the unfailing guide. Whatsoever ye do, guided by him, is ratified in heaven. Repentance and remission of sin must be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are and shall be my witnesses of these things."

Thus ended the great day which brought life and immortality to light.

Our subject to-day is rich in practical matter, and numerous profitable remarks might now close this discourse. But our time is expired, and the application of this great subject, I have reserved for some future opportunity. But as I have been obliged to say some things, seemingly or really, to the discredit of the apostles, let me now do them justice in closing, by advert- ing to the fullness and beauty with which, at the close of this day, their christian characters came out of the trying furnace of fire. They exhibit an evidence of piety as perfectly conclusive as it could have been. We leave them in their poor, narrow chamber, a little, feeble flock, but full of joy and gladness. What has happened to them ? what change has taken place in their situation ? Have they been made rich, great, famous, formidable to their enemies ? Nothing of all this. Has their Lord brought them the promise, that henceforth they shall live in sweet retirement, and ease, and safety ? and that their late troubles were the last ones they should ever see ? Nothing like it. Now indeed, their labors and sufferings, their persecutions and wrongs, the contempt and curse of the world, were to commence. Their late distress was "but the beginning of sorrows." What, then, are they so glad about ? Christ has appeared unto them. Here is the all-sufficient source of their joy, in spite of a world of enemies, and a life of toil and sufferings. When they wept, they wept for him ; and when they rejoiced, they rejoiced in him. When he came, he brought them no earthly good ; but he brought them his "peace," and this was enough.

O, that we, too, might shed no tears of longing, but those for him ; nor rejoice, save when he draws near ! Thus our sorrows and our joys would be equally proofs of our piety and sources of profit and comfort to our souls. Wo to the miserable man that weeps for dust, and to the still more wretched epicurean that chews and swallows with low delight the rotten husks of his fellows, the greedy swine ! O, that God, with whom is the residue of the spirit, might visit us, that whether we sorrow or rejoice, whether we live or die, we may have Jesus near, saying, "Peace be unto you !" Amen !

MEDITATIONS.

XIII.

THOMAS'S CONVERSION.

JOHN XX, 24—29.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side : and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Now there was but one profound conviction, prevailing among the disciples of Christ, that he was alive again, soul and body ; that the plan of his kingdom was by no means given up ; that the mode of his existence was a high, incomprehensible one, fully answer-

ing to the spirituality and the universality of his kingdom ; and that all the events which had perplexed them so much since his death and burial, were but so many links in the chain of a divine plan, — a plan predicted through the course of more than four thousand years — and leading, with unfailing certainty, to the salvation of a perishing world and the consummation of all things. This conviction, as we have seen in our last meditation, was reared upon the deep foundation of sensitive, intellectual, and moral evidence, on the testimony of Scripture and on the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit ; and the testimony borne upon the strength of this conviction must needs possess all that the most scrupulous judge could demand in point of demonstration, and much more.

Thomas alone was excepted from the happy number of those who rejoiced in a risen Saviour. “ Clouds and darkness ” remained still brooding over his mind, and while the rest enjoyed the unwavering conviction of delightful and interesting *present* realities, and the sure expectation of *things to come*, which were altogether too vast and too precious fully to be realized, his mind was tossed through the space of a whole week more with the tempest of a thousand obstinate and distressing doubts. This was the deserved natural consequence of his own faulty conduct, but overruled by an allwise Providence, for purposes of the highest interest and importance, as, I trust, the sequel of this meditation will show.

There are many moral elements contained in the general subject of our text, upon each of which we

might dwell with profit, to the exclusion of all the rest. But if you remember the plan which I laid down, in reference to the history of the resurrection, you will easily perceive that I must dismiss all abstract matter, and direct your whole attention to the various features of the history itself. I am somewhat embarrassed how to divide my subject, — if a division be required — so as to pursue my main purpose with consistency and advantage. Christ must again be the centre of our meditation ; this is plain. And, still, the apostle, whose name stands prominent in our text, must needs engage our close attention, if we are to appreciate the conduct of our Lord ; and the other apostles, also, evidently claim their share of consideration, without which the whole can and will yield us no mature fruit, no clear perception, no deep impression.

Let us endeavor to embody the whole of what is essential to our purpose under the following two heads, namely :

- I. The mind and conduct of Thomas ; and
- II. The purpose and conduct of our Lord.

I. Thomas was one of that class of men, whose minds are made up slowly, though firmly ; who are more liable to fall into scepticism than into superstition ; who are exposed to the delusions of self-confidence, but who are sober and free from extremes, and persevering with peculiar equanimity where their conviction is properly matured. I know that diametrically opposite views have been, and are taken of his character ; whether with propriety, my hearers shall judge

when I shall have expressed my own conviction on the subject. Unlike Peter, whose natural tendency to extremes is acknowledged on all hands, he joined the small band of disciples in a manner, and with an exterior which deprived him of every kind and degree of prominence or distinction. For the space of near three years, nothing but his bare name is thought worthy of mention. Yet, that he was a proper subject for admission to the number of apostles, Christ himself is our warrant ; and that his religious conviction was ripening, and his christian and apostolic character developing itself during that whole period, is clear even from what little we are told of him in the gospels, and is confirmed by his apostolic career, transmitted to us through the medium of history.

In company with the other apostles, Thomas has often been charged with expecting a temporal reign of the Messiah ; i. e., a common earthly reign, only more powerful, splendid, and luxurious, more successful in battle, more destructive to its enemies, than the reigns of other monarchs. This charge, which many good men retail from the pen of learned infidelity, has no foundation in holy writ ; it is on this very point that the apostles must have differed, either positively or negatively, from the epicurean sadducees, the egotistic pharisees, and the thoughtless multitude ; and it is on this very principle — if any principle was taken into the account — that Christ must have selected them in preference to a thousand other Jews more learned, more skilled in thought and reflection, more eloquent, more influential, and in every respect more fit for the

execution of his great plan. God despises no natural talents, no acquired abilities; but at the heart he looks first, and nothing will make up for the settled perverseness of that.

Thomas's expectation of the Messiah's reign was a kind of heaven on earth; a notion which you may easily infer by a literal construction of some familiar and beautiful passages in the prophets, the spirituality of which neither Thomas nor the other apostles were prepared to appreciate. The Messiah will come, supreme in wisdom, holiness, love, and power; the wayward heart of Israel will be changed, their sins purged; soon the heathen nations will submit, and idolatry will be no more; in their tender and grateful regard for the suffering people of God, the heathen will forthwith liberate and honor them and return them to the land of their fathers, where they will dwell in perfect prosperity, harmony, and holy peace, with their king, (on whose nature and character, human or divine, their notions were ever divided, floating and indistinct) with their king enthroned at Jerusalem, and wrapt in a sacred and mysterious cloud. This idea is very much like the sentiments and expectations of some good people of the present day, particularly in England. By the same mistake they come to the same result, and their tracts and sermons, and other works have in this relation a high degree of interest to the church historian and the theologian. Only this important difference subsists between the two parties, that, at the time of the apostles such views were not only excusable, but almost unavoidable, — which is a great deal more than I should undertake to plead for those who

hold similar views at the present day. There was too little yet fulfilled, to tell us what degree of spirituality the kingdom of heaven would assume, and how far we should carry the solution of earthly figures of speech into heavenly realities, when reading and explaining the lively oracles of God.

But to prepare you to appreciate fully the mind of Thomas, I must remind you of another, and indeed, the chief mistake, which he shared with all the other followers of Christ — a mistake to which I have already alluded on former occasions. I refer to the one under which they labored as to the manner in which the kingdom of God was to come, viz. Gethsemane, Calvary, the cross, the silent grave, the short triumph of the wicked, the path of faith, self-denial, the mortification of every earthborn desire. About the close of the third year, Thomas seems to have entertained this conviction: Yes, *he is* the Messiah; if he is not the one, no one will ever come. This throws light upon a passage not easily understood otherwise. About that time, Lazarus became dangerously ill. His sisters send to Christ to request his speedy visit and help. Christ delays in order to prepare the way for that trial of faith, and for that exhibition of his sovereign power which distinguished the dwelling and the sepulchre of his pious friend at Bethany, and of which Spinoza himself confessed, if he could believe it, it would overturn the whole fabric of his truly admirable system of speculation. At last, Christ prepares to go to Bethany. This undertaking was in the highest degree perilous. “Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?” So his disciples. To

which our Lord replies in words, not of a double sense, for to that our critics object, but in words of a thousand-fold sense ; in words, not as they would have them, like to a superficies in mathematics which has length and breadth but no depth, but profound as the great deep. Jesus answered : “ Are there not twelve hours in a day ? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.” These things he said, and after that he saith unto them : “ Our friend Lazarus sleepeth ; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” Then said the disciples : “ Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.” “ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe : nevertheless, let us go unto him.” Do you understand all this ? But we return to Thomas.

He was satisfied on the one hand, this is the Messiah ; and on the other, if he goes up to Judea, he is a dead man ; and it was the utterance of his deep feelings when he turned to his fellow disciples, and said, “ Let us also go, *and die with him* ;” i. e. if he goes up, he is undone ; but if *he* is no more, the hope of Israel is gone, every tie of higher interest which binds us to this world is cut, and we may as well die with him. Thus this passage becomes clear, and serves to cast a deeply interesting light upon the religious state of Thomas's mind at that time. Christ, however, survived, and the hopes of our apostle were, of course, heightened and confirmed, and on the solemn entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, the hosannah of Thomas was,

if not the loudest, at least as deeply felt as any other. And now, put yourselves into his frame of mind, — and then go through the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, and be told of the burial of Christ, — and you will be able in some degree to realize the utter and dreadful disappointment which this man experienced. Away he fled from all society: everything, even pious sympathy, conversation, and social prayer, had lost their charms, and a gloomy solitude seemed the most eligible, and, to his feelings, the most consonant place in the world. Ministering spirits, and Christ himself appears to the woman at the sepulchre, but this has no influence with him. Obstinate he withdraws from the rest of the disciples, and returns not till late, till all the glories of the resurrection day were over. Then he returns home. He sees all countenances beaming with joy. A painful contrast to the state of his own mind. The Lord is risen, and has appeared to the sisters, unto Peter, to Cleophas and his companion, and to us all in this very room this evening! So they. Indeed, he replies, smiling sadly at their credulity, have you seen him? Yes, and we have seen the print of the nails in his hands and his feet, and the wound in his side. *It was him we saw.* Ah, you have seen him, and *merely seen*, and you may have seen a phantom. You ought to have *touched* him, and examined the matter well. How could we dare do that? but we all saw him, and clearly. It was him! Whereupon, fearless of everything, save a new delusion, Thomas makes the daring reply: “Except I too shall see in his hands the prints of the nails; and not that only, but put my very finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

Poor Thomas! If Christ was morally and physically capable of deceiving *one* sense, why could he not as well deceive *all* five senses. That the veracity of Christ was to be taken into the account of the evidence, did not occur to Thomas, nor did he feel the impropriety of such a shocking course of mistrust as he had proposed. Thus the whole week passed, and Thomas was like the troubled sea which cannot rest; doubts and daring rejection of crowding evidence, and an uneasy mind and conscience were the self-made rack upon which he agonized. How important, my friends, that we should all sit at the feet of Christ, and relinquishing every preconceived opinion, learn of *him* as little children. There we ought to sit, not once, but always. The blind-born man in the Gospel could believe, and the Canaanitish woman, and Zaccheus, and the Centurion, and the thief on the cross, and a thousand others, and Thomas, *the apostle*, totters on the brink of scepticism and ruin. Many a poor, simple old woman, many a child can believe, and *feels* the influence of heaven, and Spinoza dies without repentance, the sensible Jacobi expires in distressing doubts, Kant in gloom and darkness, and Voltaire cursing and in a rage. O, man of yesterday, proud fool that you are! tell me now, what is there which you really do *know*? Put now your finger upon the thing, and tell me, if you can, *This I do know*: then I will also confess to you that you are prepared to walk by sight, and not by faith; and that God ought to bring and to plead arguments and evidence throughout, to obtain your assent and credence.

Infinite compassion saved Thomas from ruin. Christ

knew all. When, by the sufferings of a distressful week, Thomas's mind was humbled down, his heart softened, and his fretfulness and his presumption removed, the first day of the week again in the evening, the door being shut, and the apostles and Thomas all being assembled, Christ appears in the midst of them. His first word again is, "Peace be unto you." Then looking around in the assembly, his eye lights upon Thomas, who is ready to sink into the ground for shame. He addresses Thomas, not in the dread accents of old, uttering condemnation, *Adam, where art thou?* — but with the thrilling intonation of injured love; and the sentiment was more overwhelming to Thomas's irritated, but sensible and tender heart, than all the stores of vengeance and destruction would have been. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." Who can sufficiently realize the sternness of the reproof, which the first part of this address contains, and the tenderness and affection of the latter clause. It was enough to melt adamant. It melted Thomas in an instant. Did he rise up and touch Christ, and examine his hands and side like a surgeon, who is to make an official report? Shocking, preposterous idea! Had he done so, methinks he would have sunk into the pit alive, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. No! He was a Christian, and he could and did feel all the overcoming beauty of our Lord's conduct. Conviction fastened upon his mind with the resistless power of eternal reality; shame and confusion of face at his past conduct humbled

him into the dust, and his overflowing heart, his broken voice could just summon up strength enough for the short but comprehensive confession of his faith, expressed in our text. "And he answered and said unto him, (i. e. to Christ) my Lord, and my God!" If the humble, plain exterior of his Lord had left any doubts in his mind, whether the passages of the Old Testament, and the doctrine of some Rabinnic schools, relative to the divinity of the Messiah, were true or not, those doubts were now removed at once and forever; and when, at the ascension of Christ, the apostles bowed down and worshipped him, Thomas was prepared to join with all his heart.

II. Those of my hearers who attended our last meditation, and remember the drift of my remarks then made, need but a word in order to recollect what was the main purpose of Christ in all his appearances to his disciples after his resurrection. It was this, viz : to prepare them for their great work by giving them a sensitive, rational and moral conviction, not only of the real resurrection of his body from the dead, but also of the exalted nature of his existence and its perfect adaption to the nature and extent of his kingdom. We have seen in several successive discourses how our Lord treated Mary Magdalene and the other women, the two disciples walking to Emmaus and the eleven assembled together, and how admirably he adapted his conduct to the different states of their respective minds, always aiming, with unfailing certainty and with triumphant success, at the great purpose which runs through the whole of his deep-cast plan.

Thomas is another and a bright instance of this kind. What his state of mind was, we have seen. To appear unto him *immediately* on the resurrection day, would clearly have done painful violence to his feelings. It would either have goaded him on to an absolutely unpardonable degree of resistance, or it would have *wrested* from him an assent without in the least convincing his *mind*. Why? Because he was in no state of mind to *receive conviction*. Moreover, he had abundantly forfeited the privilege of seeing our Lord so soon, and a protracted season of sore distress of mind and heart, was equally deserved and wholesome in his case. What a revolution took place in that man's mind during the whole course of the week, I do not presume to determine. What a multitude of causes conspired to make him wretched, and to pluck the weapons of his resistance from his guilty hands! After all, the body of Christ was nowhere to be found; the false report of the high-priests, that it was stolen by the disciples, was to *him* only a proof that they, with all their soldiery and seals knew not what to make of the event, and attempted to extricate themselves by lying; many a passage of Scripture, doubtless, troubled his mind; his seasons of devotion were seasons of agony and darkness; in the social circle and in private intercourse with the brethren, the whole mass of existing evidence, all the power of conclusive argument, and of holy eloquence were continually rolled upon his mind; the soft, melting beam of Christian affection was continually striving to dissolve the ice which chilled his heart; and the voice of prayer and intercession was continually poured forth in his hearing,

that he might be led to believe and be saved. And oh! when he looked at the happy countenances which surrounded him; when he listened to the sweet converse of them all, and noticed their delightful assurance, — oh! what torture to his mind! Yes, neither Peter's blazing zeal and eloquence, nor John's tender and winning persuasion, nor James's stern sobriety, nor Mary's tears, nor the combined efforts of the whole church then existing on earth, could break him down or turn him from the error of his ways. Such is the perverseness of the human heart! No, they could not turn him from his scepticism; but they *could* prepare the way, gather the stones from his path, and clear away the hindrances, till *he* came, against whose sovereign voice no sinner has ever stood up, nor ever will stand. This they did; and when they had done what they could do, then *he* came and did what they could not. *One* glance of his eye, *one* word from his lips, and the wayward heart was turned and humbled, and the immortal soul saved; and this whole story is nothing but a mirror, reflecting, at the same time, the glory of Christ and the duty of the church and the perverseness and peril of the sinner.

How kind and how wise the conduct of Christ was, in reference to Thomas, is now, I hope, clear to us all. But let us see its bearings upon the mind of the other disciples, and the whole band of believers. During this whole week they could not depart from Jerusalem, for it was the week of the Passover; this week was chiefly devoted to religious exercises in the temple, and at home. That the disciples met once or more a day, privately, we must

necessarily suppose. But it would have been neither advisable, nor safe for the disciples, if Christ had appeared often while they were at Jerusalem, and before the general meeting in Galilee. Moreover, as I have already once observed, it was in the plan of Christ to give them time for reflection, for reading the Scriptures, for the exercise of thought, the duty of devotion, and the development of faith, etc.; and what season was more admirably calculated for such purposes than this week of religious interest, and of rest from secular cares and employments? Thomas's case added to the propriety of our Lord's withdrawing for a season; but while his case contributed to deprive them of the privilege of seeing their Master oftener, it richly compensated them by its beneficial bearings upon the farther development of their views and feelings this week. A week ago this evening, a new world had been disclosed to them. They had learned *the truth as it is in Jesus*. New religious experience, and new Scripture views had rushed into their minds; but as yet, they were not to go abroad to make known the great mystery of which their hearts were now so full. Our Lord, therefore, chose to give them a work to do in their own family, and an important one too. A doubting, despairing brother was in the midst of them; an unbelieving apostle! This was indeed not calculated to *sweeten* their meetings; but it could not fail to give them a *deep and solemn interest*. How the presence of this sceptical, suffering brother must have quickened their recollection of the instructions of Christ, which they had recently received, and enlivened all their knowledge of divine things! How

must it have exercised, and put to the utmost stretch of effort, their reasoning powers, when he boldly, and in sweeping terms, questioned the reality of their united and repeated experience! How must the bowels of their compassion have yearned over the misery and danger of one, whom they could not but regard with the tenderest emotions, who had been their faithful companion in joy and wo, and who had once and again professed his readiness to die with Christ, and that sincerely, and from his heart! How must their prayers for him have been excited and quickened, their faith exercised, and every faculty of their minds and hearts taxed, to enlighten and to save him! And when all their united efforts proved vain, and when at last the happy evening hour came, and Christ appeared, and melted him down, and turned and saved him with *one glance, one word*;—what indelible impressions must they have received, of the vanity of all human strength, and of the transcending, and irresistible power of the King of kings! And when they remembered, too, who made them to differ, what humble dependence upon him who can give and withhold, with a sovereign right, whatsoever he will; what an humble dependence upon him must have mingled with their new assurance, and their never-before-tasted joys! The experienced Christian will discern the serious advantages and privileges of the little flock as enhanced by the conduct of our Lord in this case; and he will recognize that eye which seeth the end from the beginning, and that unfaltering hand which holds the reigns of winds and waves, and all the changes of this fluctuating world.

But we must hasten to the closing part. "My Lord and my God!" — this was the substance of the confession of Thomas's faith; to call it a mere exclamation occasioned by surprise, and not an address to Christ, is bidding defiance to the plainest laws of language. To which Christ replies, "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." You observe here again, how our Lord remains the same wherever he speaks and acts. Everywhere he addresses *the whole man*, and with the evidence of sense, where that is possible, immediately combines the exercise of the understanding and of the sensibilities of the heart. Thomas was no sooner convinced by the *sight of his eyes*, when a moral and religious lesson is addressed to him, to occupy and to exercise the mind and heart. But it is addressed to *us* also, and it is too important, and too beautiful, not to claim our undivided attention at least for some few minutes.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." That we should admit things indiscriminately, and without evidence, could not be the desire of Him who labored so much to give all the evidence imaginable to his friends, both of his divine mission and of his victory over death and the grave. To apprehend the true meaning and the whole moral beauty of the sentiment in question; let us look for a moment upon one of the tenderest and noblest ties which bind moral and rational beings together — here below imperfectly; but perfectly in heaven: I mean confidence in the character and the feelings of our neighbor. From the bar of civil justice this principle is indeed exclu-

ded by necessity, and nothing short of *evidence* and *argument* can be admitted. From the market-place, and from the haunts of wickedness, selfishness and vice drive it effectually, and to exercise it there would be folly. But in the better relations of life everybody feels a share of it to be due to him from his neighbor, and to his neighbor from him; and everybody is conscious that without it, human society would be degraded; there would be no intercourse but for purposes of strife or traffic, and life would be a burden. What do you think would be the condition of a state when ruler and ruled, citizen and citizen had lost all confidence in each other, and where every public transaction, political and social, was soured by universal mistrust and suspicion; and where, consequently, every assertion, of greater or smaller consequence, was to be accompanied by evidence and argument, or by an oath, in order to be at all credited. Would it not be a miserable state of things? Carry it farther, and suppose that the same unhappy feeling had crept into families, and among friends, and should call forth from every house and hearth the voice of alarm, as often as the nearest relation even approaches to pay his pretended friendly evening visit to its inmates? Then proceed farther still, and divide the members of each family, father and child, husband and wife, brother and sister, and let none of them put any confidence in the character, the conscience, the sincerity and benevolence of any of the rest, and let evidence and arguments and oaths be required daily and hourly, and say whether hell itself could be a less eligible, a more frightful, abode? It could not, you

say. Indeed not. But should you not think that this was really the case in a family or state, if you should observe that no one of its members would believe the rest without continually seeing, hearing and handling for himself? Time forbids me to treat upon this subject at large; but thus much is clear unto you all, I suppose that *confidence* is one of the elements of social intercourse, and that it is an ennobling one, which we should be anxious to retain, exercise, and deserve as much as possible. How much of evidence and argument should be required, and how much confidence reposed in every given instance, — who would pretend to decide in the abstract? Mathematics do not apply to moral subjects. Moral feeling must decide here, and the rectitude of him who seeks trust, and the generous fairness of him who grants it, equally affect the exercise of the moral principle in question. A thief, a liar, believes nobody, and is believed by nobody; a man who never told a lie, finds credence everywhere, and trusts even to imprudence sometimes. But beautiful beyond expression is the lovely picture of a Jonathan and a David, whose mutual, noble, generous and pious friendship could reconcile the most scrupulous prudence with the exercise of unbounded confidence and trust.

Let us apply these brief remarks to the case in hand. Had not Jesus foretold his resurrection? and had not unsuspecting and pious witnesses seen him? and why mistrust the one, and charge the others with folly and superstition, or with deceit? Thomas had at the same time trampled, though unconsciously, perhaps, upon the rights of humanity and of pious fellowship,

and upon the claims of a faithful master, and the duty of a disciple, by not believing till he himself saw. It was his duty and privilege to believe without sight, under circumstances like his, which rendered confidence so much an exercise of sobriety and duty, and clothed it with such peculiar moral charms.

“Blessed are they, &c.” Oh, indeed, there is an inexpressible sweetness in that surrender of love to him, that entire confidence in the friend of sinners, which leads us not only to require no evidence, no feelings, no peculiar extraordinary manifestations on his part, but which would prefer even to believe without sight, to believe upon a single, poor, short word from his blessed lips. No; I do not want to see the heavens open like Stephen, unless he choose to open them. No; I do not ask to see the New Jerusalem, like John, unless he think this best. Gethsemane seen by faith is to me the gate of heaven, and Calvary sparkles and shines to me, the sinner, with brighter rubies than the city not made with hands: it shines with the rubies of his dying love. I have not seen them with these eyes, but he who died for me sent me word concerning them, and I gratefully believe. He who died for me, — can he deceive me? can he seek my harm, my ruin? If he can, then let me be ruined! then I no more wish to live; then there is for me no heaven in the wide universe, and my last tear of hopeless sorrow is my last expiring comfort. But, no, no; it is impossible that he should deceive; no, the very thought is painful and criminal. Sweet is the exercise of unbounded confidence in him; and his pale, dying countenance, the print of the

nails in his hands, and the wound in his side, shall be to my humble faith the all-sufficient and everlasting proofs of his sincere, tender and unfailing love to me, the sinner.

All this and much more was contained in the moral sentiment which our Lord addressed to the humble and believing Thomas, and what a field of contemplation, and what a new world for the exercise of the noblest affections towards the noblest object, was opened to him at once, I need not, and I cannot tell you. But it is addressed to *us* too; and oh that no unbeliever was found in this room! 'To be an unbeliever now is dreadful. 'The sum of evidence which lies before us at this late period, is as nearly equal to sight as it well can be. And if he is blessed who hath not seen, and yet hath believed, then surely he must be cursed who hath seen, and yet hath not believed.

Permit me one or two remarks more and I have done.

In my last sermon it gave me peculiar pleasure, after having been obliged to say much to the discredit of the ten apostles, to show at the close with how bright an evidence of sincere piety they came off, through divine grace, from a contest as unexpected, as fierce and trying as theirs had been. The same privilege I am now permitted to enjoy with reference to Thomas.

“My Lord, and my God!” was the confession of his faith in reference to his Lord and Messiah, and Christ gave him the testimony, that he believed. Whether the necessity of a divine Saviour, and its inseparable doctrine of the divinity of Christ was quite plain to the

other disciples at that time, may, perhaps, be doubted; to Thomas it was plain, if his words indicate the state of his mind. That view represented in several weighty passages of the Old Testament, and existing, as it then did, in some Jewish schools, was made plain to him by the exigency of his individual case; and the frame of his own mind, and a new, broad and everlasting foundation was laid by the Holy Spirit upon which he was to rest his hope of heaven. Now he needed a divine Saviour; and, therefore, he sought and found him. Henceforth he was a faithful adherent to the truth as it is in Jesus, and a persevering and successful preacher of it. After the dispersion of the apostles he preached the Gospel to the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, Ethiopians, and in India, and probably in that country sacrificed his life for the truth of what he preached. "Let us, also, go and die with him," he had said, and so he did; and we shall doubtless find him among those who live and reign with Christ forever and ever.

The history of the conversion of an apostle of Christ and a missionary of the cross, has a peculiarly deep and solemn interest to us, beloved brethren, whom God called, and, counting us faithful, hath put us into the ministry that we should serve him in far distant lands, in the gospel of his Son. Oh, what a humbling yet cheering likeness there is between Thomas and us! There was a time with us, too, when our hearts were filled with sorrow and sinful unbelief and doubts, and when all nature seemed to put on mourning, to bemoan our undone, forlorn condition. We had no friend on earth who could help us; and, alas! we

thought we had none in heaven. Many around us followed still the world, but we could, and would no more; many rejoiced in the love of Christ, but we durst not yet; we were the outcasts of heaven and earth. Till the moment came, the moment never to be forgotten in heaven, when Christ manifested himself to us, as he does not unto the world, in all the beauty of his sufferings, in all the overcoming loveliness of the "man of sorrows." Perhaps he found us in the closet, perhaps in the mingled assembly of sinners and saints, and no one knew our perishing case, or cared for us. But he knew it; he cared for us. "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." And, "My Lord, and my God!" was all that our souls could reply. Forthwith the holy resolution was made in his strength, that, so far as we are able, his name and his praise, the story of his dying love and his saving power, should be known to the end of the earth. And now, after much of delay and toil and peril, we are in the field, and our labors are commenced. We have followed Thomas in his unbelief, let us follow him in his zeal, his perseverance and his faithfulness even unto death. But our work is a work of faith, and our hope rests not upon the goodness of men, nor upon our wisdom, skill or power, but upon his promise and his faithfulness, which never fail. There let it rest till we shall see him as he is. The world may laugh at us as fools; those whom we seek to save may curse us as heretics; every external encouraging appearance may perish and pass away like smoke;

yea, the church of Christ may lose all her faith and engagedness in the great work, and draw back her hand; the whole tide of external obstacles and difficulties may set against us; but the promises and presence of Christ may not fail us while we cleave to him. Mountains may be removed, and the mother may forget her sucking child: but he may not forget us, and his word will stand forever; and there let our confidence rest till we shall see him as he is. And oh, it will be sweet and blessed to us to trust him thus. "Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed!" what a depth of meaning lies in these few words! what spiritual enjoyment in the exercise of this elevated, heavenly sentiment! To lean upon Jesus "even as a weaned child," and to glorify and honor him by that trust whose exercise is denied to the happy spirits in heaven—for there, all is sight, and faith is no more; how blessed indeed! With what a holy intensity of desire should we seek and crave this precious pearl!

I have done. I leave the remainder to your own meditation in the closet, where, I pray the Lord who appeared unto Thomas, may appear unto us to-day and speak peace to our souls.

Finally, let me plead with you, who stand as yet afar off doubting and halting between Christ and the world; let me plead with you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God through him. Yet the sands run, the sun is not yet gone down, the day of mercy lasts still, and the offers of salvation are urged upon you. Flee from the wrath to come, perishing sinner, ere the King of kings draw nigh in his glory, to show you,

not the signs of his dying love, but the frown of holy indignation, and deal out just damnation and eternal ruin upon your guilty heads. Blessed are all they who put their trust in thee, and in a dying hour can yield up their happy spirits to thy hands with the sincere exclamation, "My Lord, and my God!" Amen.

MEDITATIONS.

XIV.

THE EARLY MEETING AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

JOHN XXI, 1—23.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias ; and on this wise shewed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately ; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore ; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat ? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him. (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from the land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three ; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou ? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples after that he was risen

from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me! And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Thus spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee! Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad amongst the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

THE scene of our meditation now changes. All the apostles and a number of other believers have seen Christ after his resurrection, time and again, at Jerusalem. They are convinced he lives. The Paschal week is spent; the time for the meeting of the five hundred brethren draws near; they all proceed to Galilee, according to the previous arrangement made by Christ, and enforced by the angels at the sepulchre, and by our Lord himself, after rising from the dead. A large proportion of the disciples and believers *lived* in Galilee, others went there to be present at the meeting. We follow them to-day. Not, indeed, to be present at that general assembly where "more than five hundred brethren" were gathered together, (for of that we shall speak in our next meditation,) but in order to witness and contemplate another occurrence, — one, at least, as interesting as any of those we have

already gone through, one very peculiar in many respects, and, as we think, comparatively very little understood. It is the appearance of our Lord, as recorded in the chapter a part of which I have just read in your hearing.

My hearers perceive that my text is again rather long, and yet it is so inseparably connected, that a division was impracticable. Economy of time and of words on my part, and an undivided attention on yours will, therefore, be the indispensable conditions of a profitable, social meditation upon the subject of our chapter. Nor must you fail to bear in mind what I have said on several former occasions, while I was discoursing upon the resurrection of our Lord. The main plan he had in all his appearances at Jerusalem, and which I have already unfolded to you and recapitulated, he is still pursuing; and if you will but follow me attentively through this discourse, and one or two more to be delivered, you will see the important work completed, you will have the key to the conduct of the apostles ever afterwards, and you will possess a sure foundation upon which you may rest with ease and comfort your faith in Christ even in your dying hour. We proceed with our subject.

We shall endeavor to appreciate, first, — the peculiar character of the history itself; secondly, — its bearing upon the case of the disciples, in particular; and thirdly, — dwell for a few minutes upon what is practically important in it, to the believer in every age,

I. The week of the Jewish passover being ended, all that the apostles knew was, that the Lord would appear to them in Galilee. They knew that they were to expect him there, and they knew no more. This is the case with every Christian in all his duties relative to the kingdom of heaven: a command and a promise of blessing and ultimate success is all the Lord gives. Particulars are denied, in order to exercise, not our acumen, but our faith and obedience; and he who undertakes to unveil what the Holy Spirit has concealed, is "a busybody" in God's matters, and an idle servant who will be struck with blindness, and run the risk of perdition unless he repent. The apostles and their companions had learnt the lesson of simple trust and obedience so well by this time, that when the solemnities of the great week at Jerusalem were over, when the mind of Thomas was turned and pacified, and every concern requiring immediate attention at Jerusalem was settled, they set out for their respective places of residence, and calmly return to their several employments. That Christ would appear to them again, and do everything necessary to accomplish the great end of his coming into the world, they were deeply convinced; so deeply, indeed, that it gave them no concern whether he would come in a week, or a month, or a year. This is exactly the frame of a true Christian's mind in every age. The Lord will come: of this grand fact he is deeply convinced; so deeply that he cares not when or how. The fanatic may see visions, and guess and calculate from Greek and Hebrew letters till he die, and the unconcerned sinner may slumber till he perish, and the confirmed

worldling mock on till the archangel's trump stop his daring derision; — the Christian knows unwaveringly that the Lord cometh, and he will mind his duty, keep his lamp burning, and his loins girded about with truth, and his accounts ready.

Our pious travellers are safely arrived at their respective homes. After resting a few days, it happened one evening that Peter and Thomas, Nathanael, John, James and two other disciples meet together, probably at the house of Simon Peter, which stood near the shore of the sea of Tiberias. Reclining around a frugal supper, they partook of "their meal with gladness and singleness of heart," and when the hymn of praise was sung, they conversed long and with deep interest on the great events which had taken place during their last visit to Jerusalem, and on the still greater events and changes that were evidently close by. In his company they last went up at the holy season, — but they returned alone; and what a breach had his absence made in their circle, and what a change in their situation! Oh, how often had he been sitting with them under this shady tree; — this tree whose full branches, whispering peace and bending down round about, seemed to shut out the noisy world, and every wandering thought, while they gladly transmitted the silver rays of the moon, or friendly smile of some twinkling star, as if nature had learnt again her original task of being a helpmate to piety, and a guide to heaven, for her Lord, the immortal man. Here used to be his seat! — unless he was induced to enter the dwelling by the many and importunate sufferers, whose infirmities and sicknesses the

compassionate Saviour bore, as it were, upon his own shoulders. Indeed, where was the spot to which they could turn their eyes without thinking of him? "Do you remember," Peter may have remarked, "that time when he walked on yonder sea, and when I had the daring to try the same, and he saved me from a watery grave?" "Aye, you had then no faith," some one replied, "and without his forgiving love you would have perished." "But this was not near as merciful," a third one exclaimed, "as when in that stormy night, you remember, we were all out at sea, and he slept sweetly trusting in God, and when we were all full of unbelief and fear, and roused him with the outcry, 'Lord save us, or we perish!' our poor shell of a boat was full of water and could not bear a thread of canvass, and trembled to the keel at every breaking sea. Indeed, we were at our wit's end, as the Psalmist says. But he rose!" "Yes," another one adds, "and methinks I can see his countenance again; how it reproved and comforted us at the same time; and then turning to the foaming waves as a king to his slaves, he ordered peace and stillness and was obeyed in the twinkling of an eye. We, ignorant, carnal-minded creatures, then little knew who he was, and we were almost in more terror at the miraculous calm which followed than we had been at the gale before. But blessed be God that his character is now unfolded to us." Meanwhile, Thomas sat with downcast countenance, wiping his eyes till he could keep silence no more. "Oh, brethren, what is it to save worlds from sickness, or from drowning, when compared with the work of redeeming one soul

from sin and ruin? What is it to pardon the misgivings of fallen nature in the dread hour of overwhelming peril, when compared with forgiving such unreasonable, protracted, daring stubbornness and unbelief, as mine was. Why am I not now weltering in the rolling billows of that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone?" "It is owing to his free and tender mercies," they all concluded. "Yes, brethren," John sweetly remarked, "He is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in him. But, beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another."

It was now between the last quarter and new moon, you remember; the nights were darksome and still; the moon rose about morning; more favorable nights for fishing could not well be expected. Their conversation being closed, instead of going to bed, Peter proposed to go a-fishing, and the night was too inviting and their hearts too full and too much melted into one at the moment, to permit the rest to retire. They all went, labored all the night, and "caught nothing." As the morning approaches, the moon rises, the east begins to glimmer, the shadows flee; the time for fishing is past, and they make for the land. All the region is yet buried in sleep and silence, save the wakeful bird that sings darkling, and the waterfowl which has begun to move swiftly, screaming, through the higher region of the atmosphere, to reach the great western sea before sunrise. As they draw nigh the shore, a person stands there; they know him not; but when they begin to be quite near, before the boat touched the sand, the stranger asks, "Children, have ye any meat?" "No," is the answer; —

to which he rejoins, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." Though they knew him not, it was no great thing to try the experiment, and when they endeavor to draw the net up again they are hardly able, for the net is full. The association of Jesus and such a draught was natural; quick as lightning it shoots through John's mind, "It is the Lord," and pulling the net as he did next to Peter, he whispers it into his ear. You would, doubtless, not expect to see Peter a minute longer in the boat, though the fishes had been of pure gold and silver. The net escapes his hands, as it were instinctively; he slips into his upper garment which he had thrown off, and leaps overboard to swim ashore, leaving it to the rest to get along with the heavy net as well as they could. The draught being secured, the other disciples come also on shore, dragging the net to land. By this time they all knew him, but there was something sacred and uncommonly awful in his appearance; something strangely mysterious in the whole scene, which precluded every kind of familiarity; and though he appeared somewhat changed and less terrestrial, if I may say so, than ever, they durst propose no question. Not far from shore there is a coal-fire with fishes roasting and bread for a breakfast, and Jesus orders some of the other fishes to be brought and roasted also: not as though the former could not suffice, (you remember the five thousand and the seven thousand men fed miraculously,) but rather to convince the trembling disciples that the food already prepared was also proper, material food. Then saith Christ, "Come and breakfast," and while they gather around him, he

pronounces the blessing, and, assuming the office of host, he distributes the fishes and the bread.

What mortal man would undertake here to draw the line between the natural and the supernatural? They are shaded together as the colors of the rainbow, and equally inseparable are the intellectual and moral elements exhibited in this narrative; and as little should I undertake to draw the line between the dignity of the divine and sovereign Lord, and the kindness of the loving and tender Master. This shading together of various elements is very often observable in the life of Christ, and the present instance differs from the rest only in form and degree, but not in substance. Who kindled the fire? how did he get the bread and the fishes? You might as well ask, Where did he remain during the ten days after his resurrection? How did he pass through doors locked up? How did he know what was going on among his disciples, and their thoughts, their frames of mind, and what are the laws of his existence now, etc. etc. I frankly confess to you, I do not know. The laws of the existence of Christ in his spiritual body, and of his moving and acting are as absolutely unintelligible to us, as the laws upon which mind generally, or God himself, exists and acts. It is vain to speculate where we have no means of experience. It is no objection to a doctrine or a fact that it is incomprehensible to you. Surely there is no time when you expect to know everything, unless you dream of becoming altogether and absolutely gods. Omniscience is a divine prerogative: you can never have it through all eternity; how much less here below,

where we are of yesterday and know nothing. Speculation finds here her impassable bounds; but there lies a world of comfort in this little story, if you have faith to lay hold of it. *Christ is the host of his people.* How often are they in distress, in poverty, in persecution, in foreign climes, on journeys by land and sea. They labor all night and catch nothing, and they prepare for a season of severe fasting and distress; and in the meantime, Christ has decked their table, and then meets with them to comfort them in all their troubles; and as soon as they are prepared for it he puts them into the way of getting into all plenty, they know not how. I could tell you ten examples from mere remembrance, where the hand of Christ was everything but visible to the very eye; but our time forbids, and such facts are not for everybody. The world will profane them and call them the effect of chance; though it is clearer than noonday that there is not even such a thing as chance in existence, — no, not even if Atheism itself were true. Oh, my brethren, my fellow pilgrims and strangers, the time may come when you will labor all night for the necessities of life and will obtain nothing, but it is only a trial of your faith. Soon the night and darkness will pass, the morning will dawn, and the voice of Jesus will be wafted down from heaven to you, saying, “Children, have ye any meat?” and while the melancholy “No” is yet on your lips, behold your repast is already prepared, your night turned into day, and your troubles into temporal and spiritual comfort and plenty.

The breakfast is ended. Before parting, Christ has a word of importance to speak to Peter. It is natural

to suppose that Peter, who leaped overboard an hour ago to come to Christ before the rest could meet him, was also as close as possible about his beloved master during the meal: and the experienced Christian who knows the human heart will not think it too much, if I say Peter probably felt somewhat tempted to outdo the rest of the disciples, not in daring now, but in love to Christ, or whatsoever it was; if I mistake not, it was some kind of emulation which tempted him, implying a comparison between himself and the rest: perhaps a comparison in reference to what is in itself most holy, just and good. This was not as it should have been. No. Why? you say; shall we not each one of us endeavor to love and serve Christ better than the rest, and be emulous in holy things? I answer with all the emphasis I can command, No, by no means! What! not endeavor to be the most pious of all Christians living, and to leave everybody behind us in godliness? No, no! as you love your souls, no! Here lies the most refined, but also the most dangerous snare of Satan. Avoid it, or you will fall; and your fall will be great. But what shall we then endeavor to be? Endeavor to be *the poorest sinners*; the golden steps of sanctification lead downward; mark it. What! shall we plunge into sin? God forbid! live like Enoch, if you can; yea, like Christ himself. But either do not compare yourself with other Christians at all, or if you do, be sure to compare yourselves with those who are better than you, and get the lowest place; and that in sincerity and in truth before God. And if you cannot get it in sincerity, infer from it your wickedness and the deep-rooted pride of your heart, and humble your-

selves into dust and ashes. Pray, what is the use of comparing one's self with others who are less? Oh, how miserable to see a Christian, who strives to be uppermost and foremost, or who perhaps thinks himself neglected by his brethren, and strives to show that he is as good a Christian and as useful a member of the Church as anybody. Is there no motive in all the dying love of Christ to induce you to love and serve him in secret? Will he not know it? Oh, yes. And is this not enough? Must the demon of emulation dress up in sheep's clothing to impel you to the production of external fruits of righteousness which you would never have borne had the church been willing to consider you a saint without them? Oh, that the humbling voice of Christ might come to you with the confounding, heart-searching question, "*Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?*" "Wilt thou compare thyself again?" Happy if you then understand the solemn appeal as Peter did, and if your answer will be like his. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Peter, thoroughly converted and changed, understood and took the hint at once, and with humble cheerfulness, as every true Christian in fact does. In an instant he gives up every claim to superiority, contents himself with professing the simple love of Christ, and for the truth of his profession appeals to the omniscience of his Lord. This he does especially in the 17th verse, where he expressly says, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus's all-seeing eye at once discerns the sincerity of Peter's profession, but also the necessity of his remembering more distinctly

and more continually his late melancholy fall. And thus he wisely connects these two forever in Peter's mind. Three times he asks, and three times Peter must testify his attachment to his Lord, till his heart and voice almost fail; then Christ gives and confirms to him the charge, "Feed my sheep! Follow thou me."

Peter has professed much, and has appealed to high authority. But he has done it in truth, and has met with acceptance. But God has a right to try and test the most sincere profession as well as the most spurious one. Peter's profession was ultimately to be tried by the *cross*, and our Lord makes of this circumstance another means of saving the beloved disciples from the perils of ease and self-confidence. The consciousness of that approaching trial was to accompany the apostle through life and to keep him continually at the feet of Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young," and strong, and knewest nothing better than common rectitude and rights and claims, thou didst make full use of the independence of thy mind, resist wrong, return injuries, and frown at oppression: but thy professed love to me will lead thee another and a harder way hereafter. Thou mayest no more resist evil; and the time cometh when, an old helpless man, thou shalt suffer thyself to be bound, and led to a place where flesh and blood tremble to go. But, when that time is come, then think of my example in death, and act as I did: "Follow me." Thus saying, Christ prepares to withdraw. The words "follow me," were evidently ambiguous, and Peter, thinking our Lord might have a private word to speak to him, followed after

him. John, seeing this, follows also; and Peter, anxious to be left alone with Christ, who, he thought, had something private to communicate to him, says, "Lord, but what is this man doing?" Christ replies: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." This reply corrected Peter's mistake, for it has evidently no meaning, if *literal* tarrying or following after Christ was intended. Its only meaning could be, I told you, you would die the same death as I did, and exhorted you to copy my example. If I have a different plan with *this* disciple, and permit him to live till *I* come to call him home, or even to judge the world, this has nothing to do with your duty to me. Follow me, this is all *you* have to do!" Peter understood the meaning of Christ now. The manner in which our Lord withdrew this time is not mentioned; the popular superstition among the brethren that John would not die till the coming of Christ, that apostle contradicts himself; and after having testified that the facts related in his gospel are true, and that he was an eye and ear-witness of them all, he closes his gospel. This brings us to

II. Our second topic, which will occupy but a few minutes. It is clear that if the five hundred brethren were to be ready for the grand assembly, they must needs receive notice that Christ had made himself visible again after their return to Galilee; otherwise they would naturally soon disperse. This object was accomplished in the present instance, together with some others of still more moment. It will appear in my next discourse, that the chief object of the great

meeting alluded to, was not only to give them all an opportunity to see Christ — for this would not have been absolutely necessary, for aught that appears — but to introduce the apostles to the whole church then living as their representatives and inspired teachers, whom they all were unanimously to follow. But if this was to be done, then the conceptions of the disciples concerning Christ, were to be ennobled and raised to a certain degree known to Christ only, and their conviction matured; otherwise the mountain weight of apostleship could not consistently be put upon their shoulders. Especially, Peter, who was to act at once so powerful and prominent a part among the twelve, needed to be armed with the panoply of a thorough, ripe experience. All this, perfectly discerned by Christ, was accomplished in the present instance; and although this important object does not appear so plain to us, in reference to the other apostles, certainly in the case of Peter the indispensable necessity of such an interview, of such a finished preparation for extensive labor in the exercise of deep personal humility, before the great charge was to be committed to him in the presence of the church, is very plain even to us. Peter was now prepared to set out on his apostolic career; and so were the rest. This was another end accomplished. The notice also probably was now sent abroad to all believers, Be ye ready, the Lord hath appeared! This was another still. In the meantime, an impression superior to any former one was left on the minds of the disciples in reference to Christ; a spirituality, a majesty, an awe marked this interview, which well pre-

pared their minds ere long to see him ride up to heaven in a cloud to repossess his throne; and yet there was nevertheless beaming from his conduct all the affection he ever had for them when he was in this world clothed in mortal flesh. Again; as in all the former instances when he appeared to his disciples, so here again, our Lord addresses himself to the external senses, to the intellect, and the moral sensibilities of his friends. No mere appeal to sense, no disproportion of what is intellectual; no morbid, or overstrained exercise of the affection; but the most beautifully proportionate exercise of all the faculties of men are discerned here, producing the most satisfactory and invincible kind and degree of conviction on the subject of his real resurrection and the exalted nature of his being. But there is something peculiar connected with the story of our text, which we cannot pass by in silence. After all, the two weeks which the disciples had lately spent in Jerusalem, and during the former of which Christ had been crucified, were a season of high excitement with them. Indeed, our Lord gave every possible opportunity at that time, to become and be wakeful and sober, to retire, to rest, to meditate, to pray, to read the Prophets, to think. His appearances there exhibit, as we saw some time since, such a wise economy, and such an adaptation to the different cases of individuals, as cannot fairly be considered the result of human penetration merely; and everywhere he labored to produce, and did produce, a conviction which rested on a deep foundation. Nevertheless, there was, perhaps, occasion on the part of the disciples to wish for another interview at this time.

Now they were amid the unquestioned realities of common life, in the sober pursuits of trade and domestic employment. "If you could see him now," some infidel would perhaps remark to them, "the thing would appear to you quite otherwise." And behold, they saw him now. He appeared. He suffered the excitement wholly to subside; on their journey homeward he was not seen: he gave them time to recover, to return to their work; then appeared about sunrise;—not his appearance, but the draught of fishes must convince them who he is. Nothing is there to divert, nothing to excite, nothing to frighten them. They eat, they drink, they converse, they are in a frame of mind beyond question of the most sober kind; and the hundred and fifty fishes caught, and accurately numbered by them, though dumb, could afterwards still testify to the interesting reality of that heavenly morning scene.

What a sea of conviction and of cheerful certainty and satisfaction must have rolled into their minds. *He is risen again!*—he is risen, though the world deny it, and all hell tremble to the bottom and foam out mad scorn and lying blasphemy and blazing persecution. He lives! their hearts shouted; and they could hardly await the time when they were permitted to make the temple of Jerusalem ring again with the great, soul-inspiring news.

Thus you see the various and important objects of this appearance of our Lord. Though learned infidelity may see no worthy purpose and drift in our story, we do see it, and we cannot spare a portion of holy writ, of which they made such hard efforts to rid themselves.

III. Several remarks belonging under this head, escaped us and came in by way of digression during the course of our meditation. For this I am not sorry. On the contrary I rejoice, because it will give me the more time (if any time be left us) to address to you and to myself, not abstract remarks, but a question in the name of Jesus, our risen Lord; a question which carries along with it all the heartsearching, absorbing importance and solemnity of the judgment-day.

“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” “Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee!”

Need I say more? Is there a heart here so dull and stupid, whose most secret cord does not thrill audibly at the very hearing of this piercing, all-decisive question, or stand aghast at the reply, clothed in humble shame, yet full of sacred single-heartedness and boldness, and big with eternal consequences? But Peter is in heaven, and the question stands recorded in your Bible, hearer, not as an idle interrogatory, but to be answered by you. You did not escape the tender regard of Jesus in the administration of his sovereign mercy; he has given you his word, he has propounded to you the great question deciding life or death; the reply of your heart will not escape the all-pervading eye of his omniscience, nor your soul the grasp of his omnipotent hand. I testify to you to-day, that, as this divine service is not an idle round of human ceremony, but the proclamation of peace and everlasting life through Christ, so is the question now propounded to you all not an ingenious display of eloquence nor a hyperbole; but a sentiment which the

divine Spirit has copied from the book of questions to be used at the judgment-day, and has hung it out of heaven for your reading, and your solemn consideration and reply before the all-seeing eye of God. It may be an empty question to Satan or to the damned in hell who are forever lost: but to you, whose sands are running yet, it is real, solemn and eventful, as one of the seven mysterious thunders in heaven.

Come now, whether you be believers or worldlings, come now and gather round this burning sentence of inspiration, which the finger of God has written upon these walls to-day; for I shall not let you go out by this door again, till I have pressed to the utmost of my power its solemn contents, and once more washed my hands of your blood, in the sight of God and angels, and men; or if you are a believer, not until I have poured its healing balm into your soul, and fixed your steadfast eye upon this polar star of your road to heaven.

My unconverted hearers, it is a matter of no difficulty, you yourselves being judges, to decide which dish on your table you like best, which book, which entertainment you prefer, for which of your acquaintances you feel any regard or attachment, or whether you do, or do not, love your father or mother, husband or wife, son or daughter, or your own life, etc. It is a matter of simple consciousness, and a little child has an answer ready to this question long before it can reply to any other. I shall therefore not permit you to plead ignorance on this subject. To love an individual without being conscious of it, is as absurd as any contradiction in terms can ever be, and the merest refuge of

lies behind which any sinner ever endeavored to hide the rebellion of his heart. You know it if you love Christ; and if you love him not, you know it likewise.

Step forth, then; the risen Saviour is here and asks you, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Remember that your answer must be given with an appeal to his omniscience. Look back upon your life, examine your dealings and your daily frame of mind, enter into your closet and draw your secret hours to the day-light before God, search your hearts as with a candle, weigh your motives in the balance of the sanctuary, —then open your mouth and speak, and all heaven shall listen and the answer will be recorded above.

If from your infancy religion has appeared a gloomy task which a poor man must perform or be lost; if religious meetings and the society of godly people have appeared to you dull seasons, and the Bible a tedious book; if novels, poetry and plays, the political, literary, mercantile, witty, or epicurean and cynic periodicals of our forlorn generation have filled up your leisure hours and engrossed your minds; if you are in the habit of rising up and retiring without prayer,—a thing which no consistent Jew, Mohammedan, or Heathen will do; if, in your dealings with men, honor has been the noblest principle, while self-denying, christian charity has been excluded; if your secret hours have been stained with secret crimes, or with thoughtless indifference to your high and divine destination and to the all-pervading presence of God,—void of contemplation and better thoughts, void of de-

votion, void of interest, void of spiritual profit; if your grand motive and spring of action has been to get along in the world, as they say, to obtain a situation, to become independent; in one word, to get, to possess, to enjoy, to become something aside from the glory of God, and the love and the kingdom of Christ; no matter whether that something was in itself lawful or unlawful, great or small; above all things, if Christ and his cross have been to you without form and comeliness, if they never melted your heart, nor lifted your soul above the follies and the mole-hill concerns of this trifling world, nor filled you with holy admiration or with holy resolution, with heavenly love and heavenly energy to follow Christ, and to do his will; then, oh, then hesitate not to confess, (for you cannot hide it,) and say, *Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee* NOT. Then hesitate not to admit, (for you had better know it in season if peradventure you may be struck with holy terror and turn to Christ and live,) then hesitate not to admit at once, that to you the divine sentiment before us is a dreadful “Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin,” i. e. God has remembered thy kingdom and finished it.” Thy fleeting privileges, thy moments of mercy hasten to their melancholy catastrophe: “thou art weighed in the balance (of heaven) and found wanting;” thy kingdom, thy inheritance in heaven, vainly purchased for thee and vainly offered, is torn from thee and given to some poor despised heathen in the island of the sea, or in yonder China or India, or to some perishing slave in the new world. Ah! it is a melancholy thing to look about among my hearers and to ask whose case is now described. Who

will be thrust out of heaven as an enemy of Christ? Methinks I can spare none of you; and blessed be the Lord that I can yet stand between you and ruin, and plead with you the cause of your immortal soul. Alas! in the evil days into which our lot has fallen, we are confined with this privilege almost entirely to the sacred desk and to the fleeting hour of preaching. In common conversation you will give us no chance. Let me then improve this moment, and plead with you as I have often done before, by all that is dear to you. Love not the world and its toys; but love and follow Christ. Let me throw the whole weight of eternity, of heaven and hell into the scale of your decision, and settle it forever that you will love and follow Christ, and serve and glorify him. Your spiritual grave is open; angels have rolled the rock away: the folding-doors of heaven's gate are thrown back; the gospel-trumpet rings in your ears. Listen, I do beseech you, listen to it while it does sound. Soon it will stop forever, to give room to the thunder of the archangel's voice. Then it will be forever too late; and I shall bear witness against you, that you have heard the sound of the gospel-trumpet, and took no warning; and the sword came and took you away, and that your blood is upon your own head. Oh, that the Lord might deliver me from that task, and convert and save you all.

To those who know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, the heart-searching question of Christ is addressed for their self-examination, and for their humiliation, no doubt; but also for their comfort. You will not expect

me to describe to you the peace and blessedness of Peter, when the great profession was made, his conscience bearing him witness in the Holy Ghost that he spoke the truth in Christ and did not lie. And though the remembrance of his fall and of a misspent life humbled him deeply, yet the sense of Jesus's love kept him from sinking, and assured him that his sins were all forgiven, and that the work of divine grace was in his heart. The great evidence of a new state of mind was there, and though he was the least among the saints, he professed Christ, and Christ was all he wanted.

My brethren and sisters, let us remember this, and not seek again the evidence of our conversion in the imperfect fruits of righteousness we bear. Since Jesus has left this world, and is gone up to heaven whence he came, perfection has ceased to dwell on earth. Let the touchstone of our hopes be *the love of Christ*. If we can look about over all creation, and then, appealing to his omniscience, say, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee," and that I love thee more than all these things; more than I do father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife, son or daughter, yea, more than my own life also; though that love may still be, as indeed it must, infinitely below our debt of gratitude, infinitely below his merits, his loveliness, and his love to us; though the fruits of our faith and love may be, as indeed they ever must be, infinitely below our obligations to him, and infinitely below his blessed, perfect example — be not disheartened. You still love him more than all besides; and do you think that he loves you less? Sooner will he blot out the stars than

quench the little glimmering spark of divine love in your hearts, or leave you to perish. Forget all your own works, all your sins and imperfections, and all your gifts and graces, too, and love him with your whole heart, though it be but small and contracted yet. He will also love you with his whole heart, and his heart is a rolling ocean of love, a burning fire of undying affection. Do you think he will reckon with you about your little works? Love does not reckon. Or does he need them? If he were hungry or thirsty, he would not tell you; Lebanon is too small for an offering, and the beasts thereof too few for a burnt-offering; and the cattle upon a thousand hills are his. It is your *heart* he wants; if that be his, and wholly his, he is satisfied; he will adorn it for himself without your knowing it. While you tune your plaintive song, "Look not upon me, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me a keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" He will answer, and say, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" "Thou hast loved much, therefore much is forgiven thee." "Follow thou me," and be forever mine! And ere you are aware of it, or think of it, or dare to hope it, or dare to believe it yourself, he will make your light shine before men, that they, not you, may

see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Like the sun you will warm and quicken all around you, though like him unconsciously, perhaps; like the stars you will shine, but not unto yourself.

“Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” Amen.

MEDITATIONS.

XV.

THE MEETING OF THE FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN.

MARK XVI, 15—18; 1 CORINTHIANS, XV, 6.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

IN selecting my text for my present discourse, I assume that Matthew and Mark, in the passages which I read first, and Paul in the one which followed, refer to one and the same event. As I do not enjoy in this view of the subject the assent of some of the latest critics, I feel an obligation briefly and candidly to mention the reasons which have led me to the conclusion to which I have come, relative to the identity of the event in the three passages of Scripture.

1. The *meeting in Galilee* was the all-absorbing subject of expectation after Christ's resurrection. The angels at the sepulchre remind the women of it, and send word to the disciples and to Peter, that it would certainly take place. Christ himself had given to his disciples a special promise of that meeting *before* his death; and by Mary, whom he met at the sepulchre *after rising from the dead*, he reminded his *brethren* of proceeding to Galilee. All these preparations answer well to the meeting of the five hundred, which was no less than the assembly of the whole church then living. In the above errands of the angels and of Christ, the term "disciples" is not necessarily restricted to the *eleven*; other believers were sometimes called so, and the expression "brethren," which Mark uses in its place, clearly points to a broader acceptance of the term "disciples." The twelve disciples of Christ were never called his *brethren* exclusively of other believers.

2. What Christ says at the meeting itself, concerns the *whole church*, and cannot be limited to the *eleven*. *They* could neither baptize *all the nations*, nor preach the gospel to *every creature*, nor enjoy on earth the presence of Christ to *the end of time*. But the church can, and will do, and enjoy all this.

3. Some, upon seeing Christ upon that occasion, doubted whether it was him, or not; this could not be expected of the eleven disciples, who had already seen Christ time and again; but must be supposed to refer to some other believers who had never before seen Christ in his glorified and elevated condition; other believers must therefore have been present, and why not all the five hundred?

4. A meeting like that of the whole church would naturally be mentioned by the evangelists; but if it is not contained in the portions of Scripture which I interpret as alluding to it, I ask, where is it contained? To the objection that neither Matthew nor Mark mention the *number* of believers present to have been so great, I reply, these two evangelists are evidently exceedingly brief towards the close of their accounts; they only mention what is altogether essential for *their* purpose, and dismiss the rest, or assume it as a well-known fact. Nevertheless, the mention of a *mountain* in Galilee, already leads to the idea of a *large congregation*, one not to be assembled within walls, as the eleven at Jerusalem used to be; and the recollection of the reader at the period when the gospels were written, would then easily supply what the necessity of conciseness did not permit the evangelists to insert.

While we implore the assistance of Him who alone can guide us into all truth, we proceed to the contemplation of the solemn and interesting event before us. It is the only instance in the history of our globe, when the whole church of Christ was assembled *in one place, with Christ himself*, visible and audible in the midst of them. Till the eternal separation of the chaff from the wheat, of the good seed from the tares, — till the consummation of all things, such a meeting will take place no more.

Unwilling to lose any prominent part of my text, I must again beg the indulgence of my audience, if the *arrangement* of the discourse exhibits nothing like logic. The *substance* of it shall not be destitute of reason and argument. The fact is, that I want to occupy the

whole ground as far as my time will permit. If I were to cut up this meditation into propositions, I should want to stretch their terms beyond the power of language. But I feel as though we should all be most profited, if we should, with one accord *accompany the little flock on their way to the solitary and interesting meeting*, and then sitting down with them, listen with solemn attention to the weighty and gracious words of Christ himself. Let us then arise, my friends, and go up to the mount, up where every better emotion brightens; where the pulse of spiritual life beats higher, and where the bosom swells and heaves as though it wanted to drink in the whole river of the water of life. O, that none of you might now remain below at the foot of the mountain, to hear and see nothing but the thunderings and the lightnings of divine justice provoked, and the shaking of nature before him to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth.

I. Our pilgrimage to the mount of vision is our first united task. But whither? into a mountain in Galilee, according to Matthew xxvi, 32, xxvi, 7, 10, 16, and other passages. But into which mountain? Scripture is silent on the subject: an ancient tradition, according to some writers, points us to *Tabor*. This tradition appears to me to possess a high degree of probability. It was on this mountain, according to the invariable testimony of antiquity, that Christ was transfigured; he knew it as a convenient and safe place of retirement. The topographical position of Tabor was exceedingly favorable for the purpose of our text. Its distance from the sea of Tiberias is but eight or nine

miles, equally far was Nazareth from it. Magdala, the city of Mary Magdalene, was at the same distance. Even Samaria on the south-west, and Capernaum on the north-east, were but twenty miles off. It was on the west side of the lake of Tiberias, that Christ had already appeared, as we saw in our last discourse, and thereabout his followers must have been gathered in expectation of the meeting. The peculiar nature of the mountain itself was perhaps more favorable than that of any other in Galilee. Tabor is a solitary cone north-east of the plain of Esdraelon, from four to five hundred fathoms high, with a platform on the top, of near half an hour's walk in circumference. The sides of the mountain, composed of limestone, were, and still are, covered with a forest of oaks. In less than an hour its summit can be reached, but the latter half of the journey being difficult and uncomfortable, the top of Tabor has always been a solitary place. In the morning the summit of the mountain is covered with a cloud, which, towards noon, passes away before a fresh breeze, by which the height is sometimes rendered unpleasant that part of the day. As the cloudy covering is rarified, a prospect opens, well calculated to expand the bosom of man, and prepare the most trembling heart for the conception of great resolutions and vast hopes. On the south, successive vallies and hills run down as far as the grand rock of Jerusalem. On the east, proud Jordan meanders with royal ease along the fertile valley, and the lake of Tiberias reflects the canopy of heaven with its passing clouds. Still farther east, the vallies of Hauran lie spread out; and on the north, tower the Hasbeian and Casmian mountains,

with the majestic Lebanon behind them. And finally, on the west the fruitful plains of Galilee shade away into a picture more and more delicate, till the eye can perceive them no more. Mountains close the scenery, otherwise the Mediterranean sea might be seen. And how well our Lord knew to make nature tributary to his holy purposes, I need not prove; and why should he not have done so here. I need only add, that the season of the year as well as a multitude of other circumstances, arising from the nature of the spot just described, and indeed of the meeting itself, oblige us to suppose that the journey was performed during the latter part of the night, and that the rising sun found them all assembled, and Christ in the midst of them.

But let us anticipate nothing. We are in Galilee still. Mysteriously surrounded by him, whom we used to see in mortal flesh, we are awaiting among the rest of his disciples the coming of that interesting moment when the long promised meeting on yonder solitary mountain, shall be announced. All necessary preparations are made, all minds calmed, settled, solemnized, — every carnal expectation hushed, every doubt dispelled; the time is come. The notice is given in the evening, and flies from heart to heart, from house to house on the wings of sacred joy. Angels appear to be the bearers of the holy errand; for it moves with the swiftness and the unfailing certainty of lightning. The midnight breeze wafts the glad tidings to the dwelling-place of every distant believer, not one excepted. But upon the enemies a deep sleep hath fallen from the Lord, and not one of them apprehends the approach of the great hour. They all slumber un-

conscious; no mocker annoys the harmless pilgrims; no cursing or trifling wretch disturbs their pious conversations and the psalms they sing by the way; no foe obstructs their path; no spy is hid on the mountain-top to mark them for prison and slaughter.

Like scenes are acting over in our times; and they have in fact always occurred since the meeting in Galilee. How often does it happen that God puts it into the hearts of some despised Galileans or Nazarenes to get together in an early meeting before sunrise, to meet the Lord, to pray together to him, to meditate upon his word and to receive his commandments. Thoughtless men either know nothing at all about it, or they smile at the superstitious notions of these singular people. It is a matter of no consequence with them; the rearing of a house, the purchase of a fashionable toy, the lying tales of the day, and every other like folly receives incomparably more attention than such a superstitious prayer-meeting. And then, commercial news, literary publications, political phenomena, — who would ever be so ridiculous as to degrade them to a comparison with the despicable season of an early social devotion to which none of the “wise men after the flesh,” none of “the mighty,” none of “the noble” are called. But sooner or later, the consequences of such a despised prayer-meeting are felt; and many a sleeper who mocked or cursed them in his heart while stretched on his couch, can all the night through get neither sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids; for the Holy Spirit has descended, and conviction has fastened upon him, resistlessly, till he cries for mercy and submits. And in

another house or palace, you find, perhaps, the unreclaimed rebel sealed to destruction. Ahab or Julian stretched on his bier, or Saul struck with madness, or Herod writhing under the gnawing of the undying worm, or Voltaire or Francis Newport breathing out with their last curse their despairing souls, doomed to hell fire. Two or three praying Christians assembled can open the gate of heaven, and bring down the Holy Spirit, and where he comes, there are "voices, and thunderings and lightnings and an earthquake;" there is judgment held, eternal destinies are settled, eternal interests gained or lost, and souls sealed for heaven and put forever beyond the subtlety and power of earth and hell, or sealed for destruction and given up to reprobation and damnation irrecoverable, "hopeless as the decisions of eternity and the reversion of doom." And you may believe this or not; this does not change the case: eternity will reveal it ere long. Look at the christian institutions of the day: may God keep us humble and contrite while we ask, Are not Bible, missionary, tract, temperance and many other societies on either continent, the fruits, the consequences of such meetings? Do they not now, as it were, live by them? Reasoning from what they have done, tell me whether they will not ultimately change the moral aspect of this entire world, and whether kings, or wise or mighty men will be able to resist them? Be careful and despise not a couple of ignorant praying Christians nor dare to slumber while they pray! They are handling the undying spark from the altar in heaven; if they cast it into the mine, there is no telling where the resistless explosion will stop.

But we lose sight of our travellers. It is again about full moon, and the nights are cool and delightful. During the night, our pilgrims started; and as the morning dawns they ascend in small companies on every side of the mountain. There were the eleven disciples, all the believing relatives of our Lord, Lazarus and his sisters, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, a number of converted Samaritans, Roman officers, Greek proselytes, and many from the various surrounding countries whom Christ had healed and who believed on him.

As they mount up beyond the inhabited base of the mountain, the region becomes more and more still and devotional. All nature seems to rest in contemplation and to be preparing to meet the rising sun, her king, adorned with the jewelry of a rich, refreshing dew. By and by, the lively quail begins, in the deep clefts of the high lime-rock, to call her little neighbors to devotion and labor. A solitary lark or two are already warbling in the air hovering about the mountain-top. The wakeful birds here and there prepare their voices for the morning hymn, and the stork on the inaccessible peak bestirs herself to guide the concert. There is much of sacred beauty in simple nature, and happy the man who can walk abroad alone and open his heart wide, that God may fill it with all the wonder, delight and praise for which his perfect and mighty works call so mightily. Our pilgrims arrive on the summit, issuing, about sunrise, from different points of the forest. Could I but describe to you now their meeting, their salutations, their joy, their love! But I cannot. No doubt many were delightfully surprised, too, to

see a friend, a brother, a sister, an aged father, a decreped mother, unexpectedly in the pious circle. Why! are *you* here also? I thought you were a mortal enemy to our heavenly Lord, and to all his people. What brought you here, I pray? A mute embrace, a blush, a trickling tear were the answer. But what surprised all of them most, was, no doubt, the large number that came together. But a few weeks after our Lord's ignominious death, after a few appearances, before the Pentecost-day even, "More than five hundred brethren!" Oh, the power of divine grace! Oh, the resistless charms of the cross! There are some here who know what such a meeting means. It is a foretaste of heaven, and cannot be described.

They are assembled, they are gathered close together, they are yet pressing each other's hands when the Lord appears! This was the interesting moment, the meridian height of the scene. An awful silence ensued. Love and reverence bow them to the dust; they surround him, some kneeling, some lying on their faces, some looking up to him with mingled rapture and self-abasement. It is a scene of holy and overwhelming interest. They know not what they are doing. But there was so much of the heavenly, of the angelic and the divine in his appearance, that they experience something of that prostration of nature which always attended the special divine presence through the Old and New Testaments. "And when they saw him," says Matthew, "they worshipped him" prostrate, "but some doubted." And here it is where another interesting portion of holy writ gives and receives light and significancy as we shall briefly show.

The evangelists, (Matthew xvii., Mark ix. and Luke ix.) state that during the second year of our Lord's ministry, he once took with him Peter, John and James up into a high mountain. There Moses and Elijah appeared; our Lord's whole aspect was changed and glorified; a voice from heaven was heard declaring him the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. The disciples were prostrated and overcome by the scene till it was over, till Moses and Elijah disappeared again, and Christ resumed his usual appearance and spake to them in the same kind and familiar manner as before. On descending from the mountain, "he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead." Why they should tell it then, was dark to them. They of course obeyed, and kept the facts in their minds as a mysterious thing to which futurity was to give them the key. This key was given to them in the occurrence of the morning of which we now speak. The appearance of Christ was so heavenly as to prostrate the whole assembly. Trembling nature testified that God was present. But was *this God Jesus of Nazareth?* Was the personage they saw, their beloved master? They had never seen him thus, not even after his resurrection; perhaps not even the eleven had seen him thus. No wonder that some of the assembly doubted. And thus the moment had come when Peter, James and John could arise and testify, "Yes, brethren, *it is Him you see.* We have seen him so before. A year ago and on this very spot (for it was probably the same) we saw him so, and his appearance was no less superior, no less awful then,

than it is now, nor was our amazement and terror less great than yours is at this moment. Let us, therefore, dismiss every other thought and listen to what our Lord has to say." "Lord, speak, for thy servants hear," was the universal voice, and this brings us to the second part of our meditation.

II. Having already consumed so much time in the first part of my discourse, I am compelled to study brevity, though there is a world of matter before me now.

There is a seeming contradiction in the story of our text which we must first remove. In introducing us to this scene, Matthew mentions the eleven alone, and Mark refers to them and to them only. The words of Christ, on the other hand, are evidently not to be limited to them. Those in which miraculous powers are promised were common to many other believers in the apostolic age, and are confined only to a certain period, but not to certain persons; and those words which contain the command of preaching the gospel to the entire world, and the promise of his presence to the end of time, evidently point to the *church of Christ in every age*. The solution is, that the eleven are thus particularly mentioned, because they were prominently, though not exclusively, addressed. By doing this, Christ established or confirmed their apostolic character before all the assembly, and settled forever who were to be the ultimate authority in the church. This circumstance accounts at once for the fact, that none of the converted relatives of Christ, none of the converted priests or pharisees, none of those believers

even who themselves wrought miracles, ever so much as attempted to become the infallible leaders of the church, or to vie with the eleven in authority; but willingly and faithfully followed their directions, whatsoever they were.

But let us hear what he says. The assertion of his own character, the great duty and the great privilege of the church; this is the three-fold point of view under which his weighty address will best be ranked.

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” All depends here upon the question, What is the meaning of “heaven and earth,” in the language of Scripture. We are, doubtless, not to give it a meaning foreign to Scripture usage, unless we mean to handle the word of God deceitfully. A few passages will put this subject beyond every candid or reasonable doubt.

It means the visible creation without any limitation whatsoever. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Genesis i. 1. Here heaven and earth are the universe most plainly: heaven includes the stars, &c., all the systems of heavenly bodies visible to us; “Let there be stars in the firmament of heaven.” Genesis i. 14. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them. Genesis ii. 1. “The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.” Genesis xiv. 19. 22. “Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matthew v. 18. “The Lord (Jehovah) who made heaven and earth.” Psalms cxv. cxxi. cxxiv. cxxxiv. cxlvi. Isaiah xxxvii. Jeremiah xxxii. Acts iv. and

in other places. The same sense it has in a multitude of passages, as every child knows. Again, it means the habitations of the moral and intelligent beings in this and in the spiritual world. "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven (angels and saints) and among the inhabitants of earth." Daniel iv. 15. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for Jehovah speaketh." Isaiah i. 2. Here the universe is addressed, but with special regard to the intelligent inhabitants of either world. "Let heaven and earth praise him." Psalms lxi. 34. Heaven is the spiritual world conceived of under the category of place. "He (God) will hear from his holy heaven;" (Psalms xx. 6.) i. e. from the world of spirits where he eminently dwells, being a spirit. "Heaven is my throne and earth my footstool." Isaiah lxvi. 1. "Do I not fill heaven and earth? says Jehovah." Jeremiah xxiii. 24. Angels always come down from heaven; the universality of Jehovah's reign is therefore expressed thus: "Thou art God of all kingdoms, thou hast made heaven and earth." 2 Kings xix. 15. 2 Chronicles ii. 12. Nehemiah ix. 6. And his supreme greatness, too high to be reached by finite beings. "He is high as heaven; what canst thou do?" But I must desist. Passages of this kind are too many and too familiar to make it necessary to cite more. To say that heaven means the church, and earth the wicked world, or that heaven is the church in the other world, and earth the church in this, and the like pitiful contrivances to escape the influence of an unwelcome truth, is a forlorn endeavor. An unqualified denial is all I have for them. Until those men who want to impose such

perversions upon us bring me one good passage in proof of what they say, I should consider it a loss of time and character to refute them." No! this is my only argument, until I see more than great swelling words, and wholesale assertions without proof.

"All power," etc. etc. Do you know now what this means? Do you make it less than omnipotence? If so, let us see your proofs; and if from Genesis to Revelation you find a passage fit for your purpose, you are the first who ever found it, and I give up my argument at once. Omnipotence, then, is its import. But that omnipotence is an absolutely divine attribute, and that one divine attribute cannot exist in a being without all the others, and that the being who possesses them is God—to deduce and prove all this, falls into the department of philosophy, and can be carried through triumphantly. But I waive this here, because it does not enter necessarily into my purpose.

You remember what I said respecting the exalted appearance of Christ, and now how these mighty words will correspond with it, is too plain to escape your notice; but what follows corresponds no less with it. An assertion of extensive import he has made respecting himself, a commission of immense extent follows. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Salvation or ruin shall be the unavoidable alternative attending your administration. Baptize them and teach them to observe all which I commanded you. Convert the whole world! Truly a commission which needed to be supported by the omnipotence of him who gave it. To any other one than

an omnipotent being reasonable men would have answered, and rightly, Are you beside yourself, or do you think that we are so, to give us such a ridiculous charge as this? Who will go over the world and change the hearts of selfish men to the love and performance of precepts as spiritual and self-denying as those which we are to teach them. Has ever a sober, thinking man, has ever any philosopher thought of such a thing? Yea, has ever any dreaming theorist been extravagant enough to think of it? Has Pythagoras, Socrates or Plato, or Confucius been bold enough to think of a scheme like this? You say they were not enlarged enough for the conception; they were uncommissioned of heaven. Be it so. Has ever Moses thought or talked of such a work? Never. The prophets indeed speak, and with transcending beauty to be sure, of a golden age of the world, but they merely speak of it, and none of them has ever entertained the extravagant notion of carrying it into execution, and that by a handful of ignorant and despised men as we are? Never, never! we shall not—we cannot comply. Thus they might have said, had the charge come from a mere man. But this is not the case. The charge came from one who takes no refusal, and who can and does give with the command the ability to perform it, though it be to create worlds. “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Ah, to be sure, this harmonizes well; and the retrospect of 1800 years, and especially the short but rich and wonderful history of evangelical missions—(may God take all the glory to himself!)

these are commentaries upon the texts quoted, which outstrip the boldest flight of fancy.

“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” You see the extent and beauty of the commission. It is a soul-stirring conception broad as the universe, deep as the fathomless ocean, delightful as the untarnished bow of mercy in the summer cloud. Tell me no more of the gigantic greatness of ancient times and generations. I know they were gigantic, while the self-conceited vulgar of these days “of small things,” have dwindled into dwarfs. I know there is no Alexander, no Sesostriis among your crowned conquerors, and their cabinets are chess-boards, where cunning, not wisdom, is displayed. Our poets, alas, make rhymes to get bread, and our philosophers are full of themselves, and void of God and divine things. I know that among our poets are no Homers, among our philosophers there is no Socrates, and among our lawyers no Demosthenes. I can well remember the story of the gigantic tower of Nimrod, whose remains have outlived 4000 years; I too have read of the Rhodian image, of Diana’s temple, of cities with an hundred gates; of catacombs and pyramids, and of the excavated mountains of India, before which our enlightened age stands in silent wonder. These efforts betray vast conceptions, no doubt, and the men who made them knew how to calculate on a bold scale, and then to set about their work with an earnestness that deserves high credit while the earth shall stand. It is indeed grand to think what notions the head of man can give birth to, and what his hands can mould, frame, or rear.

But his mastery over brute force or mechanical power is after all but a fraction of his native excellency and inferior in kind; and the pride of tyranny which prompted all the great efforts of antiquity, and the filth of immorality, and the superstition which cling to their productions of art and to their nervous writings, are matters of deep sorrow to the lover of mankind, and forbid his desire to roll back gone-by centuries; and, blessed be God, he need not roll them back. Why should he? Do you desire to be engaged in a great work? here is the greatest work the world ever saw,—the illumination and salvation of a world! Do you want vastness? here it is. It could not be vaster. Do you want intellectuality? here it is; it could not be more intellectual. Do you want usefulness? here is usefulness in its perfection. Do you want what the admired works of antiquity lack—simplicity, philanthropy, moral beauty, heavenly temper, godlike fruits to others and the noblest conceivable self-reward, i. e. reward undeserved and unsought, most freely bestowed, yet *surer* than the rising of the sun, most honorable both to the giver and to the receiver? here, here they are, all bound up indissolubly in the great commission which Christ gave to his little flock on the solitary mountain in Galilee, when he said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” But, my friends, this is a suitable place for you to stop, and to ask yourselves, one by one here, What am I engaged in? Am I engaged in this great work? I need not be a minister, or missionary for that. Do I possess the kingdom of God in

myself, and do I promote it in the world as I walk along in the path of my duty? Perhaps you say, I am but an insignificant individual — what can I alone do? Who wants you to do something *alone*? I, too, am but small; but if I must be a drop, I will be a drop in the ocean of God's universal kingdom, and not in the filthy puddle of this world. Oh, my friends, what are you about; your souls are indeed drops fallen from the clouds of heaven; shall they die in the stagnant pool of selfishness and moral pollution, or in uninterested sloth and thoughtlessness? or shall they swell the tide of Ezekiel's river rolling over this world with healing power? Ah! think — make up your mind — life and death are before you, and life and death only. A third choice you have not. It is no pleasure to perish in company.

But we hasten to the close. The great privilege of the church is the legacy of the continual presence of her Almighty Lord and Head. The first part of Christ's promises, awarding to some the gift of miracles, is best commented upon by the Acts of the Apostles and the authentic history of the church. It related to those to whom afterwards that talent was committed and to none else. Its purpose was to put the seal of heaven upon the doctrines of the gospel; that seal was put on, and the history of sacred and profane history on the subject furnishes us with materials for a rational conclusion, equally good and imperious with the evidence of our own senses. Every sober, well-trained reasoner knows this. But the second part of the promise, being of equal extent with the command just noticed, has the same immediate practical interest to

every true believer under heaven, till the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father.

“Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” I am fully aware, and I willingly grant, that there is a mental presence in some place remote from us, which may be predicated of any man. Says Paul to the Corinthians, “For I verily, as absent in the body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.” This is a presence in imagination most clearly, the apostle imagining himself in the midst of the church of Corinth to excommunicate a young man who was guilty of gross misconduct. So he says to the Colossians, (ii. 5.) “for though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” Nobody has ever inferred from these passages that Paul was omnipresent; for they are given in such a connection as to prevent every mistake, and to show that they are to be taken in the same sense in which we say, Distance does not separate true friends; We are daily among our beloved in lands remote, etc. Another presence is the prophetic one in a vision. When Gehazi run after Naaman whom Elisha had healed from leprosy without taking any reward of him, and when he took money and raiment from the Syrian, and hid it, and then came before his master, prepared to play the hypocrite and the liar, his master said to him, “Went not mine heart with thee when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is this a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards and vineyards, and

sheep and oxen, and men-servants and maid-servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever." This was a presence in the prophetic vision, and nobody ever fell into the mistake of supposing Elisha present everywhere on earth, and at all times till the world shall end.

A widely different impression is made by those passages of the kind when Jehovah is the subject. Exodus iii. 12, Jehovah says to Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee," i. e. in the whole work of Israel's deliverance from the Egyptian bondage. Deuteronomy xxxi. 6, 8, Moses says to Joshua, "Be strong and of good courage. Fear not, nor be afraid of them. For Jehovah thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee." Joshua i. 5, Jehovah himself says to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." "Be not afraid," this is the divine promise to Jeremiah (i. 8.) "be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah. Similar is the promise of Christ to Paul on the road to Damascus. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Arise! I have appeared unto thee to make thee a minister and apostle both of the things which thou hast seen, and of those thou shalt yet experience. And I will deliver thee from the people and the nations unto whom now I send thee, etc. All these promises bespeak a presence widely differing from that of Paul among the Corinthians and Colossians in the passages referred to, or of Elisha with his servant Gehazi. But by far the most emphatic and extensive one of the kind is the promise of Christ before us: "Lo, I am with

you every day, or all the days, (*πάσας τὰς ημερας*) to the very consummation of time, (*εως της συντελειας του αιωρος.*) And now add to this, that he who gave the promise implying omnipresence, had professed with the same breath to be omnipotent, and that with the same breath he had given a charge to his disciples to preach the gospel to every man, woman and child: a charge which runs down to the end of time, and which presented difficulties altogether unconquerable by flesh and blood, — and then say, whether this promise, which must correspond to the profession and the charge preceding, is not the grandest and weightiest of this kind on all the pages of the sacred records, from Genesis to Revelation.

I close unwillingly and reluctantly. I would I had another hour, at least, for practical remarks, both to the professed friends of Christ and to those who aim at a ruinous neutrality.

The object of our Lord in this remarkable assembly was now obtained. All his people knew who he was, their great duty in his service, their debt of love; their relation to the world was clear to them, and all that was cheering and quickening was richly given to them in the great promise. The character of the apostles was established, and that church was organized which will prove the joy of the whole earth, which the gates of hell will not overcome, and which will stand till eternity shall be no more.

All flesh is grass, and the hypocrite is lighter than vanity, and is as nothing. But before the true believer let the kings of the earth tremble, and the wise stop their mouths, for the Lord Almighty is about him, and

will plead his cause. Let the sincere Christian remember that he is never alone, but that the Mahanaim of the Almighty are his van and his rearward and surround him on the right and on the left. But this also is never to be forgotten, viz. that the presence of God is attached to the work of proclaiming the Gospel to the perishing world whose messenger of peace the Christian is charged to be, and that whenever he presumes to seek his own, the impenetrable shield of his protection is gone, and the fiery darts of Satan may pierce his heart and make a corpse of him ready to be buried in hell.

Here is the secret unfolded why the church has been so lean at different times. She forgot and forsook her work, and Christ forsook her. But the time is at hand when she will rise in the fullness of her strength, and sound the trumpet of the gospel to make the earth tremble, and the heavens resound. Then shall the omnipotent arm of her Lord be made bare, terror shall overwhelm the persevering rebel, and the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters fill the sea. Amen.

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation, and that its history is a history of growth and expansion. The second is the fact that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and that its history is a history of the struggle for assimilation and the creation of a new American identity. The third is the fact that the United States is a nation of diverse peoples, and that its history is a history of the struggle for equality and the recognition of the rights of all citizens. The fourth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great power, and that its history is a history of the struggle for world peace and the establishment of a new international order. The fifth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great wealth, and that its history is a history of the struggle for economic justice and the redistribution of wealth. The sixth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great influence, and that its history is a history of the struggle for moral leadership and the promotion of human rights. The seventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of great hope, and that its history is a history of the struggle for a better future for all its people. The eighth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great faith, and that its history is a history of the struggle for spiritual renewal and the strengthening of the bonds of faith. The ninth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great love, and that its history is a history of the struggle for compassion and the healing of the wounds of the world. The tenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great courage, and that its history is a history of the struggle for freedom and the defense of the principles of democracy. The eleventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of great wisdom, and that its history is a history of the struggle for knowledge and the pursuit of truth. The twelfth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great beauty, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the preservation of the natural world and the promotion of the arts. The thirteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great strength, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the defense of the nation and the promotion of the interests of the people. The fourteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great honor, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the preservation of the values of the American people. The fifteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great glory, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the achievement of the American dream. The sixteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great pride, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the recognition of the achievements of the American people. The seventeenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great respect, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the recognition of the rights of all citizens. The eighteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great dignity, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the recognition of the worth of all human beings. The nineteenth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great compassion, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the relief of the suffering of the world. The twentieth is the fact that the United States is a nation of great love, and that its history is a history of the struggle for the promotion of the love of God and the love of man.

The history of the United States is a history of the struggle for the realization of the American dream. It is a history of the struggle for the creation of a new American identity, the struggle for the recognition of the rights of all citizens, the struggle for the establishment of a new international order, the struggle for economic justice, the struggle for moral leadership, the struggle for a better future, the struggle for spiritual renewal, the struggle for compassion, the struggle for freedom, the struggle for knowledge, the struggle for the preservation of the natural world, the struggle for the defense of the nation, the struggle for the preservation of the values of the American people, the struggle for the achievement of the American dream, the struggle for the recognition of the achievements of the American people, the struggle for the recognition of the rights of all citizens, the struggle for the recognition of the worth of all human beings, the struggle for the relief of the suffering of the world, and the struggle for the promotion of the love of God and the love of man. The history of the United States is a history of the struggle for the realization of the American dream, and it is a history that we must all share.

MEDITATIONS.

XVI.

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

ACTS I, 4—11 ; LUKE XXIV, 59—52 ; MARK, XVI, 19.

And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel ? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany ; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

ONCE more I must call upon my hearers to accompany me in my wanderings through Judea and Galilee, while I endeavor to follow Christ and his little flock. With the close of this meditation I shall dismiss a subject which I have pursued for more than a year, though not without considerable interruption.

Near forty days were now past since the resurrection of Christ from the dead. He had "showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs," and was seen repeatedly by many under divers circumstances and for purposes most worthy of his pursuit. All was now accomplished. The church of Christ was organized, the apostles commissioned, directions, promises and everything needful for the present given. The Holy Spirit himself could not be communicated till Christ was exalted and glorified. If you ask why not, I shall send you with your question to him who giveth no account of any of his matters; though to Christians it ought to be clear that while Christ himself was bodily present, that Spirit who was to remind the disciples of their Lord's instructions and who was to take of the things of Christ and show them unto them, was not called for. Christ, then, was to be exalted and glorified to send down the promise of his father. With this event his earthly career and our subject closes, though his activity does in fact eminently begin there.

Jerusalem, and especially the mount of Olives, which had seen him in his deepest humiliation, were to see him also in his highest exaltation. Thence he was to ascend up to heaven. It was very convenient for his purpose that Pentecost was now near, one of the three

great festivals when all males were to appear at Jerusalem. The celebration of it fell upon the fiftieth day after Passover, or Easter, and it needed but a hint from our Lord, to induce the disciples to set out a little sooner. This course was evidently in the highest degree important. On the preceding great festival, when thousands of people were assembled at Jerusalem, Christ was condemned and murdered; and when he rose, lies were scattered among the multitude, saying, that he was nevertheless dead, but that his corpse was stolen and carried away. On the succeeding great festival, the operations of his Spirit were to be seen by the same congregation of strangers, and the truth was to be proclaimed to those upon whom outrageous and inconsistent falsehood had been imposed not many weeks ago. This was decreed in the court of heaven. But if this was to be accomplished, Christ must first return to his heavenly home and his throne, and, as I remarked, the mount of Olives was to be the scene of the important event.

The appearance of Christ to James, his relative and afterwards bishop of the church at Jerusalem, took place, according to Paul, (1 Corinthians xv. 7) after the meeting of the five hundred brethren, but probably before the last interview at Jerusalem. As no particulars are known on that subject, we omit it. It was probably in reference to his future office in the church that Christ had to give James some special directions, the details of which were important only to him.

It appears, therefore, that the eleven disciples and several other members of the young Christian church, went up to Jerusalem about a fortnight before Pente-

cost. At Jerusalem our Lord appeared to them at least once more before his ascension,—where, in what house is uncertain. It was then that he ordered them to wait at Jerusalem “for the promise of the Father,” i. e. for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; for they were not many days hence to be merged, as it were, in the powers and the light of heaven, just as John the Baptist had merged, or immersed many in Jordan, baptizing them unto repentance.

On the fortieth day after his resurrection, they met again in some private dwelling at Jerusalem, evidently by a special appointment of their Lord. Then, when they were all together, he appeared, and for the last time. They knew it to be the parting meeting, and what question could lie nearer to their hearts at that moment than the one they once more propounded to him, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?” Is it this that you wish us to wait for at Jerusalem? is not the restoration of Israel’s kingdom the promise of the Father, or is it not at least included in it? The expression “at this time” was going rather too far, though their anxiety for the coming of his kingdom was perfectly proper, and every true Christian in every age shares in it. His answer therefore merely is, It is not proper for you to inquire into times unrevealed; your privilege is to receive the Holy Spirit, your duty to proclaim the truth, and to build up that kingdom whose coming you so much wish, and to prepare the way for the King of glory. In proper time he will come and will not tarry. He then “led them out as far as Bethany.” It was again early in the morning, it appears, for we do not read,

nor do we have the least intimation that the little company was molested or even noticed by anybody. "And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them." (Mark.) And "while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Acts i. 9 — 11. "And they worshipped him and returned with great joy unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey." Luke xxiv. 52, and Acts i. 12.

Here finishes the account of our Lord's days on earth. My theme has at the same time reached its close.

Nothing could, in my view, be more profitable now, than to trace back the whole course of our meditations and to get a synoptical view of the subject upon which we have dwelt so long. But many of my hearers were not present at the beginning, and the interval is too great to promise any success in such retrospect. Moreover, as I have often been obliged to tax your patience by protracted discourses, it may not be amiss, if I limit myself at this time to the simple utterance of my own feelings in view of the solemn ground over which I have been permitted to pass successively in the course of these meditations.

Christ is gone to heaven, whence, on the strength of his own testimony, he came. This fact is established on the evidence of eye-witness testimony, better than most of the thousand events in general history, which everybody believes, and which it would be ridiculous to reject. But besides all this, it is established by the evidence of prediction, i. e. Christ predicted this event in connection with other events of his life, and the others, some equally improbable and impenetrable according to human foresight, have demonstrably come to pass; and, therefore, if unsuspicious witnesses state that they saw him ascend, they ought so much the rather to receive credence. Yea, more; the event or fact in question is predicted together with other changes in the life of our Lord in books not only demonstrably, but necessarily, much older than the books of the New Testament, and in books the untouched, untarnished purity of whose text is acknowledged even by those who reject their inspiration. How these men account for predictions contained in them, and which the ablest advocates of their cause never have removed nor explained fairly on their infidel principles, is none of my business; they may see to that; and their desire to throw down inspiration, the golden ladder that unites earth and heaven, gives me so little disturbance or concern, that I give them no thanks for sitting still. Would I was rich enough to give these poor men wages for their hard, ungrateful work; for Satan, poorer still than they, can give them none, and truth can only gain by their efforts, and conquer, but not perish.

Christ is gone to heaven, and sits at the right hand

of the Majesty on High. This is a fact like thousands of other facts in history, only more firmly established than the rest. But besides its unyielding evidences, it is a fact eminently practical to every individual in this world, or in this room. It is not one of those indifferent stories which you may believe or deny without any consequences to yourselves. No. There is a heaven-wide difference between this and common facts and occurrences, though these may attract the attention of all the world, while that lies neglected till the judgment-day.

Dividing my hearers, as I always do, into converted and unconverted ones, I shall endeavor to allude briefly to their respective relations to the exalted Savior of sinners, to the future Judge of all flesh. And it will be quite worth your while for a few minutes to attend to a subject to which the hour of death and the judgment-day will impart an importance weightier and vaster than the ocean, and in which all the frail fabrics of your earthly concerns shall be shipwrecked and forever perish.

There is an awful moment in the history of Israel which urges itself upon our attention at this time. While Israel dwelt in the wilderness, Korah, Dathan and Abiram and two hundred and fifty princes among the nation rebelled against Moses and Aaron. "Ye take too much upon you," they said, "seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" In vain did Moses remind them of their distinguishing privileges in the community; in vain did he call them for

brotherly consultation. They refused to come, and abused and grieved him with charges equally unjust and bold. Moses, conscious of his innocence and his higher mission, was grieved, and said to the Lord, "Respect not thou their offering, for I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt any one of them." Then laying aside willingly his authority as the law-giver of the nation, he descended to become a simple defendant, and said to Korah, "To-morrow the Lord will show who are his and who are holy; and will cause him to come near unto him (to be priest;) even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him." "Be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou and they, and Aaron, to-morrow. And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also and Aaron, each of you his censer." This done, the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tabernacle unto all the people; "and the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." But they fell upon their faces and prayed for Israel, and their humble plea prevailed; for prayer is mighty with God. And the Lord spake again to them, and said, "Speak unto the congregation, saying, "Get up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abiram." The separation was readily made, tents round about the rebels were broken up, property and families removed, and a wide chasm appeared round about. Korah, Dathan and Abiram, proud and hardened as every infidel is against God, stood at the doors of their tents with

their families. "And Moses said, hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and if the earth open her mouth and swallow them up with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." Nothing could have surpassed the solemnity of such an appeal directly to God, — an appeal which, whatsoever was to be the event, was necessarily big with important and irretrievable consequences. Moses, the man of God, the mediator between Jehovah and Israel and their saviour from reproach and bondage and idolatry — the man who was in all his offices a type of Christ, — he had given for years the most unquestionable proof of his higher mission, and every candid Israelite was convinced and clave to him. But Korah, Dathan and Abiram and their company, whose hearts were wrong and full of ambition, resisted successfully the evidence of Moses's mission. It was absolutely impossible to give them more and better proofs than they already had resisted and rejected, and what could Moses do more or less rather than to appeal to God himself, and commit the decision to him in the sight of all Israel. The appeal is made; Korah, Dathan and Abiram are standing in their doors, unmoved, and all the people at a distance look on with awful interest. A few moments of interval, a sullen, breathless silence, such as precedes the dreaded shock of the earthquake, when

no wind dares to breathe and creatures stand, in breathless expectation, Korah, Dathan and Abiram's fates are pending, and the last seconds of repentance rolling by, — the last one comes, arrives, passes unredeemed — a shock, a shriek of terror, and they are gone, and Israel flees affrighted from the smoking pit, saying, "Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."

But if "he that despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

In the fullness of time Christ came in the flesh according to numerous and unquestionable predictions. God bore testimony to his divine mission by the true word of prophecy and audibly in the hearing of friends and foes; and he himself, whom his adversaries could not and cannot accuse of one sin, bore witness of himself and sealed his conviction with his own blood; and his numerous friends, men of sound mind and upright character, gave him record to their own temporal harm, and persevered in their testimony unto death; and his still more numerous enemies sealed the whole mass of evidence by their infernal conduct, which showed on what side they were, and by their ridiculous and contradictory lies, than which they had nothing better to defend their perishing cause withal. Christ rose from the dead and took his place on the throne of

the universe. The word of God has been attacked by every weapon of learning, wit, and fraud ; and the church of Christ, by civil power and brute force often, and always by the haughty contempt of those who professedly never experienced anything of her heavenly peace and joy. But both stand unmoved. Stand ? No. They extend, they spread, they pierce unknown regions ; they enlighten and redeem men's souls, in spite of the world, and Satan and all his host ; and they are living witnesses that Christ liveth and reigneth.

Here let the sceptic say whether more evidence than this could, according to the laws of mind, have been given. But yet, he believes not. Why not ? Because he will not believe. He is like Korah, Dathan and Abiram standing coldly, and smiling in the door of his tent. Not Moses, but Christ has made the last deciding appeal, and that to the judgment-day. The sceptic wants more evidence — more evidence. The authentic history of the life, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ are nothing unto him ; the unaccountable existence and continuance of his truth is nothing. But Christ will sit unmoved on his throne, till the great day of reckoning draws nigh. The sceptic will have no more evidence nor proof till the sign of the Son of Man appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth mourn and weep. “An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men

of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, — and behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, — and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” Korah, Dathan and Abiram shall rise up in judgment with the generation of our sceptics and worldlings, and condemn it; because they resisted only the mission of Moses, — and behold, a greater than Moses is here! During the few seconds of their fleeting lives, their case is pending, and the acts of heaven are kept open. There is silence in heaven for every sinner, by the space of half an hour, and the sun lingers and lingers on the horizon. But there is a time when saving mercy retires weeping, and when justice recovers its claims; when God arises and swears, in his wrath, that they shall not enter into his rest; and then the ground cleaves, and they perish without remedy. Death and the grave come, and they descend quickly into the pit, and come no more till the trumpet of the resurrection pierce their graves. But then — then they will appear, though they hide themselves in the centre of the earth. O what a sight will it then be, to the multitudes of unbelieving kings, statesmen, philosophers, and scholars, rich and mighty men, standing speechless, confounded and condemned before the judgment-seat of Christ, whom they used to consider a phantom, and infinitely below them. Then, too, they will no more say to us, as they do now, — “Ye take too much upon you, ye preachers of the

gospel, to condemn so many honorable, well-bred people; seeing all the congregation are holy, and the Lord is among them: wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord — and think yourselves justified in preaching needless terror?" This they say now; but we have the consolation not to have taken anything from them, nor to have hurt one of them. But then they will see that we are the men who, at the expense of their own comfort and popularity, threw themselves between them and ruin. Too late they will acknowledge that the faithful, home-spoken sermon was a token of regard and affection worth all the idle phraseologies of a deceitful world.

This, then, is your situation,—mark it well. Christ sits at the right hand of God. The mass of the evidence of his divine mission and the terms of salvation and the comminations of perdition encompass you as the ambient air which you cannot escape: you are standing there in the door of your tabernacle, and not Israel; but heaven looks on your daring with amazement and sorrow. Your case is awfully pending; the moments of mercy are gliding away, and the day, the moment of decision draws nigh and will soon be present, and soon past, to be recalled no more. O that you were wise to consider your latter end and make the Judge your friend.

But this situation need not be yours. Come over to the people of God. Kiss the Son before he be angry, and ye shall not perish in the way. Come out of Egypt and settle in some corner of Goshen, and your change will be as it were from midnight into noon. For there, where the people of God dwell,

there subsists a relation to the exalted Saviour which could not be more delightful.

Though ascended up to heaven, he is with them alway, even unto the end of the world. What I now say, is neither delusion nor poetry ; but reality, more sober, more real than this visible world ; for it has the evidence, not of material, but, of spiritual experience. The glorified Saviour is with his people. He dwells in their dwellings, as at Bethany ; he meets them in the closet ; he guides their family devotion ; he blesses and breaks their bread at table ; he prospers them in their work ; and blesses them as they go out and as they come in. In prosperity he tunes their hearts and voices for the sacred song of praise ; and in affliction gives them the spirit of prayer and the hope of heaven. He is husband to the widow, father to the fatherless, the all-sufficient companion of the solitary, a physician to the sick, a guide to the pilgrim. He is the spiritual rock from which they drink and live forever ; the manna that came down from heaven ; his people eat, and the second death has lost its power. Everywhere and always his particular providence is over them, in the shady cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, till they are in the promised land. He is their high-priest, and their names are written upon his breast ; and from his countenance beams the unfading Urim and Thummin by which they steer their course to heaven. They are not set adrift, like the world, and at the mercy of every wind, and drawing near to the all-devouring maelstrom of the pit ; but their course is to the port of endless rest, and Christ is at the helm. Until he perish, they are safe. Taught by Christ, who is their

teacher, their views of earth and heaven, of social, political, intellectual, moral, and religious subjects are spiritualized, refined, and sanctified ; and their better existence in union with Christ has begun. Their sorrows are sweet and their joys profitable ; all is seasoned with heavenly spices and the hope of eternal life ; the dawning of this eternal morning borders the interesting landscape of their pilgrimage, and the end of their faith is the grand promise to inherit all things, and to reign with Christ forever.

Shout, little flock, with the voice of triumph ! Fear not ! Thy God reigneth. Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh. Weep not too much that your beloved is despised and rejected of men. He is above the sneers of worms ; and his omnipotent voice will ere long hush into eternal silence the evil and the wisdom of this world. “ Yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” “ As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall (also) the coming of the Son of Man be.” He will come in the glory of his Father ; his train shall fill the heavens ; and the earth shall be full of his praise. Judgment will be held, — his eternal kingdom will commence in the sight of all the universe ; your desire and longing for his honor will be satisfied perfectly ; and not a mind, in heaven, earth, or hell, shall doubt that Jesus reigns. In the all-revealing light of the judgment-day, every knee will bow to him and every tongue confess him LORD, whether it be willingly or unwillingly, whether with the shout of sacred joy and praise, or with the gnashing of fruitless despair. Grand, grand beyond human and angelic

conception, will be the scene, when the proclamation of his eternal royalty shall make the arch of heaven ring, then resound to earth, and roll through the caverns of the world of wo. At the judgment-day, which is drawing nigh apace, all will and must acknowledge him ; and at the great moment of eternal parting, the unnumbered multitudes of the redeemed at the right hand of the Judge, and the lost, condemned rebels on his left, more numerous than the sands on the sea-shore, will join in one thundering chorus, saying, Jesus reigneth ! — almighty to save, or to ruin ! His name endureth forever ! — and all the universe will answer, amen !

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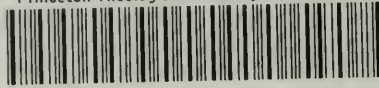
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